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THE NEW-CHURCH REVIEW

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THE

NEW-CHURCH REVIEW

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THE MODERN USE OF THE BIBLE*

By THE REV. LEWIS F. HITE

MODERN thought, especially modern religious thought, faces in a new way two fundamental questions: (1) What is the Bible? and (2) How are we to think of the Lord Jesus Christ? We may answer directly in the traditional language of the Church: the Bible is the Word of God; and we are to think, as the Church has thought from the beginning, that Jesus Christ was Divine. But modern knowledge and modern thought raise further questions as to these answers. Granted that the Bible is the Word of God, what does the statement mean; in what sense and how is it the Word of God? Granted that Jesus Christ was Divine, what is the meaning of "being divine"; in what sense was He divine differently from other men? To put the questions somewhat differently, How does the Bible differ from other books; and How does Jesus Christ differ from other men?

If we face these two questions squarely, in the light of modern knowledge and in the way of modern thought, with

**The Modern Use of the Bible.* By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, D.D. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1924. 291 pp., 12mo. Price $1.60.

modern presuppositions and tendencies, we have two problems of immense importance and difficulty. They involve further and fuller knowledge of the nature of man and the nature of religion. Modern knowledge and modern thought claim to have cleared the field to an unparallelled extent. Natural science and the natural history method have given a new face to nature as well as to history, and have gone far to establish the presupposition that all history and all experience can be understood and adequately described in terms of natural science. This attitude and this claim have been asserted in the field of religion, as elsewhere. When therefore we approach the Bible, or undertake to interpret the Lord's personality and life, we are at once confronted with naturalistic presuppositions, and with the results of the natural history method.

The book before us is a good specimen of natural history treatment. Doctor Fosdick is an outspoken and eloquent representative of the modernistic temperament and attitude. He has won fame and popularity as a religious teacher and as a preacher, especially in college circles; and he has acquired a position of leadership of so-called liberal opinion. In view of these circumstances, we may look to him for a fair and authoritative statement of the modernistic view of the Bible.

The book was originally a course of lectures delivered at Yale University on the Lyman Beecher Foundation, and may be considered as the substance of his teaching in Union Theological Seminary. In fact the substance of the book is contained in the first lecture: "The New Approach to the Bible." Here he lays his foundations, and outlines his argument. Adverting to the situation in general, he points to the fact that to many ministers "the use of the Bible is an enigma": some avoid the Bible altogether in large part; others use their texts as "pegs on which to hang a collection of their own thoughts"; still others show "their discomfort and confusion when they try to discuss Biblical problems,

such as miracles"; others again cast aside the Bible "as the inspiration of their thought and teaching," except by way of illustration. He quotes William Newton Clarke to the effect that

> To the average minister today the Bible that lies on his pulpit is more or less an unsolved problem. . . . Criticism has altered the book for his use, but just how far he does not know. . . . [Nevertheless] he longs to speak with authority on the basis of its teachings, and feels that he ought to be able to do so. He knows that the people need its message in full power and clearness, and cannot bear to think that it is losing its influence with them.

Such considerations set the task, and call for "a constructive contribution in this field." The attempt would be worth while, "if only a few ministers, laboring under the handicap of the prevalent confusion, were helped to handle the Bible with new zest, freedom, honesty, and power." Besides this, the substance of the Bible is so interwoven into our thought and speech, its words, phrases, and ideas are so fully incorporated in our Western literature, and so deeply imbedded in our habits of mind and feeling, that we cannot treat the Bible as if it did not exist. It is not the question of using the Bible or not, but how we are to use it. Multitudes of people are "all at sea in their religious thinking"; the traditional way of using the Bible has failed them, and they are left without a proper basis for their spiritual life. What is the remedy?

The author thinks that the seat of the trouble is in "Biblical categories" which are no longer believable or usable. He argues that ministers, to be of service in solving the doubts of the multitudes of today, must go through the searching criticism to which the Bible has been subjected the last few generations; in other words, wade through the Higher Criticism. He must come out "with a positive, reasonable, fruitful attitude towards the Book." What is needed is the understanding "that its basic experiences are separable from its temporary forms of thought."

At this point, we are presented with a summary of "the results of the modern study of Scripture." The first is that the writings of the Bible have been re-arranged in chronological order. This means that we can trace "the great ideas of Scripture in their development from their simple elementary forms, when they first appear in the earliest writings, until they come to their full maturity in the latest books." This involves a new approach to the Bible. The historical apparatus and the idea of development enable us to *interpret everything* in terms of its early origin and gradual growth. "We know now that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike origins"; and that "the Bible is the record of an amazing spiritual development." The conception of duty, for example, is enlarged as we pass from the earlier to the later Scriptures; so too the idea of God. At first we have narrow, group ethics and a tribal God; in the end we have a universal moral standard and the idea of God as a universal spiritual Presence. In this view, the Bible is the record of "What God was really doing in that amazing spiritual development." There are four ways of knowing the Bible: (1) its beauty spots; (2) its several books; (3) its characters, i.e., its personalities; and (4) its historical development. Only in the last do we get a knowledge of the Bible as a whole; and this is really to know the Bible. This is the new approach to the Bible.

There are certain results that follow this approach. For one thing, it removes the difficulty of trying to harmonize the Bible with itself, of trying to make the earlier statements agree with the later. Early statements are interpreted in terms of early stages of development; and they have their significance with reference to the final and complete stage, that of "Christ and his Gospel." Another thing this understanding of the historical development does. It removes the temptation to allegorizing, and enables the reader to take the Bible language in its strict literal sense, as mean-

ing just what the writers put into it. We can no longer "read out the literal sense, and read in the sense" we wish to find. There was a time when allegorizing was resorted to in explaining difficulties and harmonizing earlier and later Bible statements. Accordingly, the older interpreters "ascribed to the ancient writers a mystical knowledge of all later learning, and made the early stories of a childlike age the parables and symbols of the Greek philosophy or of Christian theology." At a later and more advanced stage, the Christian Church—Luther and Calvin, for example—abandoned the allegorical method, and adopted the strict literal method, giving to every Bible statement one meaning, the meaning it had for the writer. Here, then, we have a summing up of the methods and conclusions of the Modern Approach.

We may say at once that the outcome is at least questionable. When we have dissected the Bible and re-arranged its contents in the supposed chronological order, how much have we contributed to a better understanding of the message it was intended to convey? Was it primarily the historical situation that we wanted to get at; or even the contents of the writer's own mind, the meaning which he had in mind, and wished to convey? Suppose we could attain final and complete success in both these respects, how far would we be advanced in our knowledge of the Bible as the Word of God? According to the representatives and champions of the "Modern Approach," we should then have in due chronological order the history of the Jewish race, together with some comments on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ; and we should have certain ethical and religious ideas of the Hebrews set forth in the order of their natural development from primitive and simple to successively higher stages of complexity and perfection. The only significance of the lower stages would be the help they give us in understanding the higher, and finally the highest. The earlier stages would have only historical significance;

the ethical and religious ideas would be successively replaced by the later, and in accordance with evolutionistic philosophy the whole series would in the end be displaced by the advanced stages of today. Suppose the writers or compilers of the Bible text were inspired, and that the Jewish race was highly endowed ethically and religiously, what evidence do we find in the history beyond the assigned development? Or again, in what respect was the inspiration of the Bible writers different from or superior to that of Plato or Shakespeare?

So far as our author is concerned this question is answered by an appeal to the ethics and religion of the Gospels. But the validity and success of this appeal must be judged in the light of the historical method and of the modernistic attitude. We cannot foretell how far in the modernistic mind the ethics and religion of the Gospels will be superseded by the ethics and religion of the present day. When if ever that comes to pass, the Bible, Gospels and all, will be relegated to the historical scrapheap. Furthermore, the principle that the Bible must be taken historically in the strictly limited sense, that we should seek only the historical situation and the meaning the writer had in mind, leads to strict literalism. Accordingly, the author rejects allegory both in principle and in practice. The result is that the literal, historical truth of the Bible language becomes a matter of the first importance. This is now the issue between the fundamentalists and the modernists. The modernist is able to avoid the issue in part by maintaining that the Bible statements may have been true for the writer, but cannot be true for us; that the writer used the language and ideas of the day, and wrote according to his lights and the knowledge of his day, but we must read and interpret in accordance with our standards. In other words, we must treat the Bible as we do the old cosmogonies, as historical curiosities, not as scientific expositions. The Bible is an "old book in a new world." On the other hand, although

allegory may have its dangers, and doubtless has been abused, its avoidance has also its dangers; it may yet save the case for the Bible in the future, as it has done presumably in the past. It is true that in the Alexandrian period and especially among the Neo-pythagoreans, allegorical interpretations ran riot extensively and ruinously. But some of the critics of allegorizing perversity do not seem to be aware of the real basis of allegory, both in nature and in language. The truth is, allegorical writing, as well as allegorical thinking, is inevitable; we find it characteristically in Homer, in Plato, and in Shakespeare, as well as in the Bible. The use of allegory is as natural and as spontaneous as language itself, and just as fully grounded in the life of the world. We all, even the extreme literalists, take the Bible allegorically when it is convenient. The Call of Abram, the Journey to Canaan, Crossing the Jordan, the City of Jerusalem, and so on almost without end, are insistent and familiar allegories. When we read in Isaiah (i. 16), "Wash you, make you clean," no one restricts the meaning to the literal sense. Numberless examples might be cited. It is in fact this figurative use of language that gives the Bible its spiritual value. However, the difficulty comes when we undertake to make a systematic use of allegorical interpretation; and the abuse comes when we try to solve historical and linguistic puzzles by the application of this principle. The Church has lacked a universal and valid method of symbolic interpretation, and its use of allegory has been fitful and arbitrary; and for this reason men have gone into absurdities, and the method has fallen into disrepute, in spite of its continued general use. But we must postpone further discussion of this problem to a later stage of this review.

The next three succeeding chapters of the book—"The Old Book in a New World," "The Ancient Solution," and "Abiding Experiences"—are devoted to expanding the positions taken in the first chapter. Under the heading "The

Old Book in a New World," the author develops the contrast between Bible language and the language of today. This contrast is sharpened and made all the more impressive by the results of modern scientific investigation. The knowledge of the ancient languages, especially the Semitic group, the discovery and translation of contemporary documents, textual criticism, more complete history, archeology, comparative religion, have all combined to give us an intimate and detailed knowledge of Bible times, and of the life and thought of the times. We are able to get back to the historical situation of the Bible writers, see what they saw, learn their ways of thinking, read what they wrote in the light of their day, ascertain the precise meaning of the words they used, and fix the date of the composition. The result of all this is that when we bring our modern minds into close contact with the language, the ideas, and especially the ethical and religious habits of thought, we find difficulty in fitting Bible statements into our scheme of life. "In a way never true in Christian history before, we stand face to face with the historic sense of the Scriptures." On the other hand, science has remade our outlook on the world, and we feel the contrast and incompatibility. This makes the problem which the modern man faces with his Bible. The author's solution directs attention to the distinction between "the fundamental experiences of man's spirit" and "their temporary expressions."

But the problem is not new. Ours is not the first age when new conditions made it necessary to accommodate the Scriptures to the times. The situation has recurred again and again. Previously, the one supreme recourse has been allegory. Here the author under the heading "The Ancient Solution," devotes a chapter to illustrating the shortcomings and the failure of the allegorical method. He begins by recognizing and admitting the importance and universality of the method. "No other method of interpretation, whether in our Hebrew-Christian tradition, or in the use

of sacred scriptures by other peoples, has been so widespread, so deep-seated, so indefatigable." The later Greeks allegorized Homer; the Stoics allegorized Greek mythology; the Hindoos and the Mohammedans allegorized their scriptures. The Jewish rabbis allegorized their own Scriptures. The early Church Fathers, as Clement and Origen, and Augustine, and so the mediæval Church, for instance Wyclif and Savonarola, allegorized. Allegory has "controlled Christian preaching throughout the greater part of its history." Calvin, and to a less degree Luther, rejected allegory. Calvin succeeded best in adhering to the principle of the Reformers that "every passage in Scripture has but one meaning"; and to Calvin more than to any one else Protestants owe the rejection of allegorical interpretation. From the Reformation to our day increasing light has been turned on the historic sense of Scripture; and we now ask, "What *did* the Bible say to those who first produced it, and read it?" "We face the Biblical world made historically vivid over against the modern world presently experienced, and we cannot use the old method of accommodating the one to the other." That is our difficulty. "We cannot honestly allegorize." "We face the old problem, but we cannot use the old solution."

The essence of the solution which the author undertakes to set forth may be compactly stated in the form, There is no such thing as truth. There are experiences, many, various, and progressive; but there is no adequate and abiding expression of them. Men interpret their experiences; they form ideas and concepts by means of which they refer to the several qualities and characters of their experiences; then they find or select the terms which stand for the ideas and concepts. In this way "categories" are formed and used. The author's contention is that such categories are formed by each age at its own convenience; but as the age changes, the categories change with it, but the experiences abide. For example, the early Greeks, or at least

some of them at a certain period, thought of the earth as a flat disk; later as a short cylinder; and still later as a sphere. But they had experiences of the earth's firmness, its fruitfulness, its vast extent, its varied surface, and the beauty of its scenery. All men have these experiences of the earth; but we now think of it in different categories from those of the early Greeks. So too the Hebrews of old thought of God as a man who was concerned for their welfare; later they, or at least some of them, thought of God as a "universal spiritual Presence." The experience of His help continued from age to age. The ways of thinking depend upon changing categories, but the experiences abide.

So the author takes certain typical categories,—immortality, the second coming, demons, and angels,—and undertakes to show that these categories changed with the growth of knowledge; but the experiences for which they stood are yet with us. He recites the usual history of the changes that have come about in men's ways of thinking of these things. Immortality was thought of as physical resurrection; the second coming as a coming in the flesh; demons and angels as personal beings who interfere for evil or for good in human life. Now we reject the physical resurrection and the physical second coming, and no longer think of demons or angels as malicious or benevolent beings, or otherwise. But we still hold to the thought of immortality and the second coming; and the experiences with which demons and angels were connected abide with us.

Inasmuch as the author justifies his view of the Bible and the modern use of the Bible on the basis of such considerations, we may well pause here and inquire just what his formula, "abiding experiences and changing categories," means, and whether it really serves his purpose. To begin with, we notice that there is obscurity and confusion of thought in the author's development of the subject. The terms "categories," "phrasings," "ways of thinking," are used interchangeably. Strictly speaking categories are con-

ceptions; and according to psychologists, James for example, a conception is the most unchanging of all things; we may reject a conception, but we do not change it.

But apart from terminology, the use made of the above formula is more serious. It is admitted that our knowledge grows from age to age, and the objects of knowledge acquire new characters, and so the descriptions of the objects change. Doubtless many things are described in the Bible which we would describe otherwise. But this is not really the point. When demons are mentioned in the Bible, and we say there are no such things as demons in existence, it is not a question of changing categories, or different phrasing, or different ways of thinking about the same thing; it is a question of truth. Either there are demons or there are not. If there are not, honesty requires us to deny the truth of the Bible statement. It is a mere subterfuge to say that the statement was true for those who used it, but not for us; and this subterfuge lurks in very much of the author's writing and thinking. He professes to be a strict literalist; at least he did when he was attacking allegorical interpretation. For him the Bible writers said exactly what they meant, and meant what they said; the language they used expressed their own thought, and nothing else. If their thought was wrong and their statements false, we are bound so to judge and declare. In short, in this respect at least, the formula, "changing categories and abiding experiences," fails to protect or preserve the Bible in its integrity.

We notice again, and still more significantly, that in applying his formula the author abandons his literalism, and resorts to convenient but quite arbitrary allegorizing, the same in kind as the mythological allegorizing of the Alexandrian period, which he so resolutely condemns. Take, as a simple and typical case, his treatment of the Bible use of demons and angels. He agrees that when the Bible writers used these words, they meant to be plainly

literal; but he contends that we, knowing that there are no such things and looking on from our advanced stages and higher planes, may connect their categories, phrasings, and ways of thinking about these things with their own actual experiences and with the experiences of others. In other words, we may see and say that for them the experiences were due to the action and influence of demons and angels; but for us the demons and angels are pure fictions, while the experiences were real and abiding, the same for us as for them. We have insanity, epilepsy, hysteria, melancholia, bad dreams, deafness, blindness, dumbness, moral ills, temptations, wickedness, sinfulness, but we do not refer them to the agency of demons; our "framework of thought" is different, we cannot use demonology as the "method of explaining human misery and sin," though this is "thoroughly characteristic of the New Testament." "What we have in ancient demonology is a transient phrasing of abiding experiences." "Nothing the devils ever stood for has yet gone out of human experience." It is the part of the modern preacher to "decode" the abiding meanings of Scripture from outgrown phraseology. "Some of the Bible is written in a cipher which the mind of our time finds it difficult if not impossible to read." As "the letter of the Bible often grows cryptic," all the more "must the mind of the Church be made familiar with its abiding sense." So too angels are "the common phrasing of God's ministry to men." We do not use this phrasing. "We do not practically ascribe helpful dreams or anything else to the beneficent activity of individual angels." Nevertheless, we may appreciate that belief in angels may help to make "the spiritual world real and near." The ancient category of angels was the way of expressing the experience of "the reality, nearness, friendship, and availability of the spiritual world." We should have no difficulty in understanding "What the saints and prophets meant by their belief in angels." In other words, we must take the angels and

demons of Bible language as categories, symbols, not of actual, definite beings, but of real experiences which the writers referred to these agencies in explanation; just as the word "centaur" was a symbol not of an animal, half man and half horse, but of an intelligence built upon an animal foundation—perhaps the naturalistic intelligence of our day. We have mythological allegorizing in both cases.

What shall we say of this principle of interpretation, which casts aside the literal and intended meaning of Bible language, and undertakes to assign the proper experiences which really correspond to it? Evidently it opens the way to the wildest and most irresponsible allegorizing, and is liable to all the objections which have been urged against the allegorizing of the past. Furthermore, it fails of its purpose. It attempts to preserve the character of the Bible by giving it historical veracity, at the same time that it abandons the principle of literal inerrancy. It grants that what the Bible writers said was true for them, and goes on to maintain that we in our superior position may assign the real experiences which were somehow, without intent, expressed by their language, language which was in itself imperfect, not to say untruthful, lacking correct reference of word and idea to object.

Obviously, this is a mere transition stage to the position of rejecting the Bible as the Word of God altogether. In principle, the letter of the Bible is dismissed as both unimportant and erroneous, while the alleged experiences belong to a primitive and undeveloped age, have merely historic significance in the light of evolution, and are naturally quite inferior in quality and range to the moral and religious experiences of our day. This being the case, the principle will lead men to turn from the Bible to the experiences of the present day for light and help, as many now in the light of the principle seem to be turning to Doctor Fosdick.

With this conclusion we might end our review of the book. But in common fairness and justice, we should at-

tempt to put the author's position at its best, and present the book as a whole. In fact, we note in later chapters well considered warnings as to possible disaster in the modernistic attitude, if not in the historical method itself. These warnings might seem to lift the book above the modernistic level, and suggest something more than the historical method.

Two of the remaining chapters deal with the subject of miracles and with the perils of the new position; and the two final chapters are devoted to setting forth the author's view of Jesus as the Messiah and as the Son of God. Under the head of "Miracle and Law" he develops a particular case of the "contrast between Scriptural methods of thinking and our own." The treatment of miracles is interesting both as a popular discussion and as an attempted solution. Various meanings have been attached to the word miracle. For example, the word may mark a distinction between what men do or can do, and what is or must be referred to Divine agencies. If this becomes ambiguous when we reflect that all things are brought to pass by Divine agency, we may choose to mean by miracle what God does in unusual ways as contrasted with what He does in usual ways. This meaning presupposes some acquaintance with regularity in the world of events. What happens regularly we understand to some extent; but what happens out of the regular order excites surprise or amazement, and baffles understanding. Now, inasmuch as the difference between the regular and the irregular is a question of degree or of further knowledge, we find no sharp dividing line between what God does in usual or unusual ways. With the growth of systematic knowledge of nature, the physical world came to be thought of as a cosmos, an ordered system. The Greeks, especially the Stoic philosophers, made Fate the supreme arbiter both in the moral and in the physical realm; the "decrees of Fate" were unavoidable. Modern science has greatly extended and strengthened the idea of

regularity and uniformity in the physical world, and has made us familiar with the idea of natural law. When we begin to think of universal, invariable laws of nature, we find any intervention, departure, or rupture intolerable. Now we may mean by miracle any such intervention or suspension; and this is just what a miracle appears to us to be. It is quite inevitable, therefore, that the modern mind should be disposed to reject miracles altogether, whether recorded in the Bible or elsewhere, and reject them on the ground that they are impossible. But apart from the impossibility, improbability, or incredibility of miracles, it is urged that there are historically unreliable, and practically undesirable. The age of miracles is past, and the "modern man" has no wish for its return; he prefers a thoroughly law-abiding world. There was a time when miracles fortified belief in Divine revelation; but now with most people they are useless, because negligible. In view of this situation, the author urges the contrast between the recorded miracles of the past and actual miracles in the present. He says:

> We are desperately trying to believe in events two thousand years ago the like of which we no longer expect in our experience nor regard as reasonable in the world. We are trying to project our minds back over a date when God changed His method of running the world into a previous age when things were done that no longer have any part in our reliance or our expectation. The result is a deadly unreality in our thought of miracle.

As to the miracles of the past, especially Bible miracles, he disposes of them on the same principle as before. They are "changing categories" expressive of "abiding experiences." The Bible writers used the language of miracle to express their belief in God and in His presence and activity in His world. They doubtless believed in the literal occurrence of miracles, but the miracle meant for them the presence and operation of God. We may or may not believe in the literal occurrence of the miracle; in either case

we take it as a mere figure of speech, a symbol, an allegory, to represent what was for them a real experience of God's working. So much for the miracles of the past.

But miracle may have a modern meaning. We may think of the universe as larger than the body of fixed laws of nature; both God and man are more than law. We may think of laws as *some* of "the ways in which the creative Spirit acts"; and we may think of a miracle as "God's use of His own law-abiding powers to work out in ways surprising to us his will for our lives and for the world." As Christians we must suppose that such miracles are happening all the time. "Belief in miracles, therefore, is not first of all an historical matter, but a contemporary challenge." Now all this amounts to saying that we may disbelieve the miracles of the past as recorded in the Bible, because they violate the laws of nature; but we may accept miracles in the modern sense, for the reason that God is larger than nature, and his actions may be surprising to us.

Apart from inconsistencies in the use of words and ideas, this whole treatment is infected with conflicting motives: the naturalistic motive to vindicate natural law; and the religious motive to give significance to spiritual life. The two motives are worked out in an interesting way, but not to a consistent conclusion. We are left not merely in an ambiguous, but in a negative position with reference to the Bible; in the end we place modern knowledge and modern experience at the helm, and to these we must owe our exclusive allegiance. There is much fine rhetoric about the spiritual beauties and power of the Bible, but the standing fact is that the Bible is a natural product; it means precisely and only what the writers put into it, and this meaning must be sought and obtained by the historical method.

This is naturalism pure and simple, in spite of the profession that inspiration guided and determined the process and result. If anything in religious history is clear, it is obvious that the Bible cannot survive mere historical treat-

ment and naturalistic interpretation. It is vain to insist that the Bible is what it is; that the spiritual beauties and power are there; that men of all ages have seen and felt these, and will continue to feel them. This may be true; and yet the very fact that selection is made of the passages that give enjoyment and help, brings with it a critical attitude, whether in satisfaction of æsthetic or of logical demand; and the critical attitude is nourished, supported, and established by naturalistic principles and methods. It may be that this attitude is inevitable, if not proper; but it is certain that we come to Bible reading with an atmosphere of feeling, sentiment, and thought which goes far to determine what we see in it and what we get from it. We cannot with safety and security rest upon the mere fact that God exists and that we have the Bible, otherwise instruction and enlightenment would be useless. The truth is that it is an imperative need, if not requirement, demand, of the time, that there be new doctrine about God and the Bible. The New Church has a new body of doctrine which is adequate.

We may postpone for the moment the new doctrine about God; but this is the place to present some features of the new doctrine about the Bible. It is one of the curiosities of literature, as well as one of the curiosities of religious history and of Bible interpretation, that there is hardly a mention of Swedenborg in the flood of books which go out from the modern press; and when there is mention, it is usually a misrepresentation. In the book before us, abundant bibliographies are appended to each chapter, but Swedenborg does not appear; and this is typical. The same is true of bibliographies of philosophy. The most charitable explanation is, that the writers of books keep within the lines of their profession and read only the approved list. They are, therefore, unacquainted with Swedenborg. There may be other reasons; the chief one is that Swedenborg occupies a higher plane than usual, and requires extraordi-

nary effort from the reader. However this may be, Swedenborg has set forth a new principle of Bible interpretation, the principle of Correspondence; and a new doctrine as to the Divine character of the Bible, the doctrine that the Bible is the Word of God by virtue of the correspondence between the literal and the spiritual meanings.

It would be aside from our present purpose to attempt to expound and illustrate the principle of correspondence as a method of Biblical interpretation. We may, however, indicate at once the significance of the principle. The principle of correspondence, or the fact of correspondence, has a very wide range. It is employed in mathematics, in all the sciences, and especially in language. The correspondence of word to idea, and of idea to object, is obvious and familiar. The correspondence of word to idea is employed in all figurative speech, and in the poetic use of language. The important and fundamental case of correspondence is that between the natural and the spiritual. The expression of the face corresponds to the state of mind expressed in it. The statue corresponds to the idea of the artist. The lamb corresponds to innocence, and so is used in language as a symbol of it. More generally, all animals correspond to the several affections which characterize them. The oak corresponds to the character of sturdiness, and is used as the symbol of it. Rocks correspond to established principles and facts. And so on at will.

In many cases, of course, this correspondence is conventional; but the convention presupposes the original natural relation. The natural relation is far from obvious in many cases; it is in fact the relation of creative agent. This is exemplified in the relation between a man's bodily life (his conduct) and his spiritual life (his thought and will). His thought and will produce, direct, and control his conduct; there is a natural correspondence between them. It is this natural correspondence between man's spirit and his conduct that is used in the Bible to give the letter a specific char-

acter. To effect this, the correspondence is universalized and raised to higher degrees. In other words, in the making of the Bible, man's conduct and his spiritual life are brought into correspondential relation with the Divine Life. In this relation, the Bible writer's words and his thoughts become channels for conveying and for describing the states of the Divine Life—God's thoughts and affections. It is this that makes the Bible a Divine book, the Word of God; in this consists its inspiration.

The correspondential character of the letter of the Bible could be illustrated almost endlessly. A few leading cases may be mentioned. For example, the word "sun" in Bible language corresponds to love, and means love—in the highest sense the Divine Love, in a lower sense human love, either good or bad. When the sun and moon are mentioned in the story of creation, they mean by correspondence love and faith as they appear and become active in the regenerating life. But when it is said, in Revelation, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it," the sun means self-love, and the moon faith in self-love. In this way we might run through the whole Bible, and interpret every occurrence of the word "sun." So we could take other words,—as "earth and sky," "land and water," "oak and olive," "lion and bear," "Moses and Joshua,"—follow them through the Bible, each with one consistent spiritual meaning. In this way anyone could test for himself, with some help and instruction, the principle of correspondence as a method of Bible interpretation.

In the first chapter of the "Arcana Cœlestia," published in 1749, Swedenborg wrote some epoch-making statements, which place him in the first rank of modern Biblical scholars. In the opening sentences, he says:

> That the Word of the Old Testament contains the arcana of heaven . . . no man can conceive who views it from the letter alone . . . But that all and every part of its contents . . . signify and involve spiritual and celestial things, is a truth of

which to this day the Christian world is profoundly ignorant; in consequence of which little attention is paid to the Old Testament.

At the close of the chapter, he says:

> This then is the internal sense of the Word, . . . but the arcana contained therein are so many that volumes of books would not be sufficient to contain their explication. What are here explained are comparatively few (n. 64).

Then he goes on:

> There are four different styles in which the Word is written. The first was in use in the Most Ancient Church. . . . From the posterity of the Most Ancient Church, Moses received what he wrote concerning the creation, the garden of Eden, etc., till the time of Abram.

When he comes to the fourth verse of the second chapter, which begins to retell the story of creation, he notes that Elohim of the preceding narrative is changed to Jehovah. He remarks that "now the Lord is first called Jehovah God whereas in the preceding passages, . . . he is called singly God"; and he explains that we have here two stories of creation because two types of regeneration, first the spiritual then the celestial, are described. At the opening of the twelfth chapter, he remarks:

> From the first chapter of Genesis thus far, or rather to the mention of Eber, the stories have been not true history, but composed history, signifying in the internal sense celestial and spiritual things; but in this chapter and in those which follow the stories . . . are true histories.

Here we have three items, which are referred to with greater fulness as he proceeds: the first eleven chapters of Genesis have a character and style of their own; Moses took these chapters from older documents; the names Elohim and Jehovah are used distinctively in the two stories of creation. This was four years before Jean Astruc published (in 1753) his book in which he maintained that

Genesis was traceable to two separate original documents; this led to the modern Elohistic and Jehovistic theories, and was the beginning of the so-called Higher Criticism.

Swedenborg was a lifelong, systematic, and industrious student of the Bible. It is safe to say that no one before or since has lived, and thought, and worked in the atmosphere of the Bible more completely than he did. He was able to see (and to help others to see) its specific and definite spiritual content, and to sketch that content in a new way, and in language which enables us to enter into it more and more fully. Insofar as this is a new age for Bible reading and understanding, it is Swedenborg's work that has been specifically instrumental in bringing it about. Whatever we may owe to the Higher Critics and their followers, they have done nothing to make the Bible new to us, except to add something to our knowledge of the historical situation and the historical content.

We come now to the crucial aspect of Doctor Fosdick's view of the Modern Use of the Bible. Up to this point he has been expounder, rather than critic, of the modernistic view; and for the most part he has taken the modernistic position. Now he turns round upon this position to enquire into its dangers; and he proceeds to state these and to discuss them under the head of "Perils of the New Position." So far he has been interested to exhibit the "contrasts in mental category between Biblical times and our own"; and he has found to his own satisfaction that "the category which at first seemed outgrown was in fact the transient phrasing of a permanent experience." In the light of this discovery, he now urges that "the essential value of the Bible lies in its abiding and reproducible experiences." This is the next characteristic step of his argument; for in his view experiences are not only abiding, but they can be reproduced and repeated. From this position he goes on to his final position, that the Bible is accessible to us for the reason that the experiences which are there recorded are

abiding and reproducible. It follows, that "the true way to understand the Bible's vital message is to go through the ephemeral category into the repeatable experience." We have here not only a method of Bible interpretation, but a theory as to the origin of the Bible. The theory rests upon a conception of life and experience. "In its basic needs and fundamental experiences life is the most constant thing we know." "And the Bible builds on that." "In the Bible mental frameworks are secondary; the creative force is always experience." The culmination of this thought may be given in his own words as follows:

> Because the basic and creative factors in Scripture are always the living experiences of the human soul in its deepest needs, direst struggles, noblest aspirations, and finest hopes, the heart of man turns tirelessly back to the Book. So rich, friutful, and indispensable are these normative experiences with God and man which the Bible thus sets forth, that the main business of the Christian preacher can be defined as the endeavor to reproduce them in the lives of men today. Preaching is primarily the endeavor not to get men to accept a formula, but to get them to reproduce a life.

According to this view, the Bible was produced by men out of their experiences with God and man; and its full and exact meaning may be recovered by getting back to the experiences out of which it came. Just what these experiences are—"the abiding glory of the Book," and "its unassailable spiritual authority"—may be seen in the light of a few examples. "Faith in creative spirit," "fellowship with God," "passion for the social good," "retreat of the soul on Christ," "regeneration of the life by the influx of the Divine, forgiving, reconciling, re-instating, and empowering," "devotion to the Lord of all great living,"—these experiences are reproducible; and "to know the Bible is to enter through its own door into such experiences" (pp. 178-9). These are some of the experiences which the author had in mind, and which he is urging us to see in the Bible, and reproduce in our living. The task that lies

ahead, of course, is to distinguish the specific experiences that correspond to given phraseology or categories.

At this point, the author turns aside to the perils of the new position. The first peril indicated is the contrast between the analytic and the appreciative attitude. Modern scholarship having picked the Bible to pieces, the danger is that the modern mind will lose the appreciation and reverence without which the process of dissection is vain and destructive. The case is compared to that of the botanist who dissects the flower, and the poet who appreciates its fulness and beauty. Another peril is vagueness and sentimentality. He cites the clever hit of a newspaper editorial to the effect that "the fundamentalists lacked charity and the liberals lacked clarity." In asserting their "freedom from the mental formulas of the past," the liberals, lacking the "discipline of older thinking and shirking the discipline of new," often land in chaos, and issue in obscurity and confusion. "Theological liberalism of today does lack clarity." A third peril of the new position is avoidance of the moral responsibility to reproduce "the spirit and quality of Jesus." "Our investigations" must lead us "into the presence of the historic Jesus himself," and face to face with the demands of his teaching and character." This responsibility is an ethical challenge which "must be faced supremely in Jesus himself." The following is his characteristic way of putting the case:

> The test of our sincerity and earnestness in claiming the repeatable experiences of the Bible as the centers of our faith and devotion comes when through the open door of our investigations, past the formulas in which first century Christianity visualized him, we come into the presence of the historic Jesus himself, and face the demands of his teaching and his character.

"Liberal Christianity," committed to this obligation, "faces the peril of shrinking" from its acceptance and "refusing to undertake" its performance. When the obligation is analyzed, and the implications set forth, the simple result

is, "Nothing matters in all this except the things that lead men into more abundant life." The full working out of this requirement would be revolutionary. Adopting a saying of Samuel Butler: "The Christian Church is full of people who would be equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted; and seeing it practised."

As these chapters culminate in an impressive plea for "taking Jesus in earnest," we look with special interest to the two remaining chapters, on "Jesus, the Messiah" and "Jesus, the Son of God." According to the formula "changing categories and abiding experiences," the terms "Messiah" and "Son of God" are outworn and rejected categories, suited to the age in which they were invented and used, but not adequate to our modern understanding. After some interesting historical retrospect in which he undertakes to give the natural history of the origin and use of these terms, the author proceeds to give his own interpretation of their modern significance. When we reproduce the experiences which were meant to be expressed by the word "Messiah," we see that a more fitting expression would be "the divinely appointed agent of God's kingdom in the earth," "divinely appointed to be the world's Savior." So too with respect to "Son of God." This term was used to express what the word *Logos* meant for the thought of the day. "The Logos was the forthgoing of God over the abyss between divinity and man"; and accordingly "Jesus was . . . essentially the forthgoing of God himself into his world." This he calls the "theological Christ." After much berating of this outworn category, against which "the modern mind often feels positive and indignant aversion" by contrast with "Jesus the ethical teacher," he finally comes to the "fundamental idea for which the Logos stood," that of "God coming into humanity." There is much pertinent insistence on the contrast between Jesus the mere man and Jesus the divine revelation of God. There are many forcible statements of

the idea, that we come to God, and know God, in Christ. We may not say, then, that Jesus was the Messiah or that he was the Son of God; but we must in Christian verity say that he brought the character of God into human life, and made it effective there.

To sum up. The modern use of the Bible, as here set forth, is to see in it a record of religious experience which through ages of progress culminates at last in the character and work of Christ.

We have made a deliberate and persistent attempt to put the author's views at their best, and have for the most part refrained from critical comment. This is one of the important books of the day, important in the statement of certain positions, and important as representing at a high level a large, or at least a significant, body of modern opinion and tendencies. Doctor Fosdick is an extraordinarily gifted natural orator. He writes with force, with an unusual command of rhetoric; and he is no mean dialectician. Added to his vigorous constitution and emotional temperament, he has a vivid imagination, and an intellect of restless activity. He is, moreover, endowed with an earnestness that has secured the development and full use of his powers. As a preacher and teacher, he has a large and devoted, not to say enthusiastic, following. His influence, therefore, is an important element in the life and thought of the present day. Many who are not his avowed followers have been helped by him. We may well ask, then, what is likely to be the total effect of this book; for the author does more than set forth the modern use of the Bible. His purpose is rather to give direction to the modern use.

The whole meaning of the book centers in the nature and use of the formula "changing categories and abiding experiences." In fact the book is little more than an historical setting of this theme, and a set of variations on it. In the course of its development, many interesting, significant, and inspiring things are said. But when the discus-

sion is stripped of its engaging rhetoric, and due allowance is made for much stimulating language of appreciation, this naked formula and its use is the characteristic feature of the book. Let us, then, consider a little more closely the nature and use of the formula.

We have already commented on the ambiguity and logical error of the expression "changing categories," and have pointed out that categories are concepts, and that concepts are of all things the most unchanging. A little acquaintance with Plato and his doctrine of ideas would have saved the author from an uncritical use of the expression. But as a matter of fact he takes a rhetorical advantage of an ambiguity. For granted that categories are in themselves unchanging, nevertheless we change our categories to suit our purpose or convenience; we reject one set, and adopt another. This is the kind of thing the author actually has in mind, although he grounds his treatment in the nature of the categories themselves. In other words, it is we, not the categories, that do the changing. The fact that men do change their categories from false to true, from true to false, from unsuitable to suitable, for example, is obvious and universally recognized; but it has no particular pertinence in this discussion. It is we who change, and make the changing stages in history.

Again, consider the expression "abiding experiences." Heraclitus and Bergson would be truly astonished to be told that life and experience are unchanging. No observation is more common than that life, as experience, is ever changing; and no one would make a more eager and effective use of this observation than Doctor Fosdick, if it suited the purpose of the moment—if, for example, he were engaged in urging the doctrine of Evolution, which, he thinks, is really at the basis of his treatment of the Bible. Here again the author takes advantage of an ambiguity. When he uses the word "experience," he means to be understood to be referring to actual, concrete experience, whereas in

fact he is using a category,—a category, like Being, Reality, Life, etc., of universal application. When, therefore, he says that experiences are abiding, he means that the category of experience applies to all particular experiences; and when he says experiences are "reproducible" and "repeatable," he means that the previous occurrence and the subsequent occurrence are covered by the category. To say that experiences in the concrete are reproducible or repeatable is so contrary to common observation that no one would seriously undertake to maintain it. The fact is, men cannot reproduce or repeat their own experiences, much less those of others. We may, therefore, confidently dismiss the formula and its use as a rhetorical device to urge and enforce his contentions, that we must abandon the old use of the Bible and adopt the new; that we can no longer hold to the doctrine of literal inerrancy; that we must take Bible language as a vehicle of the thought of the writers and of the day, but a vehicle which is no longer adequate to express the thought of our day.

The device of reading back our experiences into the experiences of Bible times and writers, is intended to preserve the Bible for modern use. But when we observe the uncertainties, the ambiguities, and the artificialities of this process, we are safe in concluding that this is not the way to save the Bible for modern use, but would be a mere transition stage to its discontinuance. What is needed is a more appropriate, a more definite, and a more spiritual understanding and use of the Bible.

Doctor Fosdick's mind works almost constantly on the naturalistic level. His religious thought is conventional, and in the main Pauline. It should be remembered that he is a Baptist preacher, with Baptist traditions, heredity, early impressions, and early instruction. His religious thought is a reproduction in modern vocabulary of Pauline theology. His religious language extols Christian experience in a vocabulary of highly wrought figures of speech and vague

categories. He extols the character and work of Christ to the highest in the expression "God in Christ"; but he repudiates as heresy the form "God as Christ," or "Christ is God." His characteristic thought is: "The God who was in Jesus is the same God who is in us." This, of course, is modern Unitarianism at the core,—a Unitarian graft on his earlier Baptist theology. In all probability Doctor Fosdick will, as did Professor Royce in "The Problem of Christianity," revert to the Paulinism of his childhood and youth. But in any case his present trend is distinctly anti-Christian in thought and consequences.

Christianity cannot survive the worship of the man Jesus, however admirably he may be conceived and exalted. It is vain to ascribe divinity to him, and at the same time ascribe divinity to man. It will not do to say, as Lyman Abbott did, "Christ was divine in the same sense that we are all divine." This kind of worship inevitably looks past and beyond the man Jesus to God, as in the formula "for Christ's sake." Such worship in the end and in fact degrades Jesus, even though he be highly and deeply loved,—indeed, too often patronized and exploited. It is gravely true that there are real and serious difficulties in the worship of Christ either as man or as God; but these difficulties serve only to aggravate the danger of the worship of the man Jesus. On the other hand, the classic doctrine of the Trinity has proved ineffective in supporting the worship of Christ as God. Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Humanity is the one doctrine of history that meets these difficulties, and points the way to an intelligent worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as God. This doctrine satisfies all demands for the real manhood of Jesus, and at the same time makes intelligible His Divine nature by a new doctrine of the Incarnation and the Glorification. It would be out of place to attempt here an exposition of these doctrines; but a word may be further said about Swedenborg's use of the Bible.

It may be thought that a reverent use of historical criticism and of the principle of going back to the experiences of the writers, expressed in their temporary phraseology, would lead to the recognition and understanding of the real spiritual sense, much as Swedenborg gives it. But there is a radical and all-important difference between the spiritual experiences which the Bible writers are supposed to have expressed in the letter of the Bible, and the spiritual sense which Swedenborg saw and taught. In the one case it is the meaning the writers gave it; in the other case it is the meaning which the Lord gave it by correspondence. The difference might be illustrated at length, and in numberless cases; and it would then appear that in the one case the experiences referred to were in the main historical fictions; while in the other, definite spiritual states and processes were identified and described with scientific method and precision. When, for example, Moses parted the waters of the Red Sea or struck water from the rock, he no doubt had an experience of the power of God. But this is not what we are most interested to know. What we want to know is, the spiritual states and processes in the Lord's life, and in every regenerating life, which those events and the description of them were meant to represent. What we want to know is, not what it meant for Moses, but what it means now for us in our spiritual life. It is just this definite help that Swedenborg gives. He reminds us that the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan is representative by correspondence of the spiritual journey we make in regeneration; and he goes on to give the specific spiritual meaning of the stages, events, persons, and places involved in the story of the Exodus. Egypt, for example, is the stage or state from which we set out—a state of mere natural knowledge and motive; Moses is the principle of the new life, that the Divine laws must be obeyed; the Red Sea is the body of false and evil life that must with the Lord's power be put aside; the wilderness journey is

the long continued experience of temptation through which every regenerating life must pass; and so on. The field which we enter here is boundless, as boundless as the creations of the Lord's Love and Wisdom.

In spite of its natural and inevitable limitations, and in spite of the mistaken and misleading principle upon which it is built, Doctor Fosdick's book is interesting and in many respects helpful. There are many sound reflections upon the thought and tendencies of the day, and much healthy suggestion as to the meaning of religious life. In fact, it is so interesting and so stimulating as to be really seductive. The incautious reader is likely to be swept along in the current of its eloquence, and to absorb without awareness its naturalistic method and consequences. There is a subtle appeal to the naturalism and egotism of the day; and this is carried into the field of religion. However, read with due caution, the book is unquestionably stimulating and suggestive. It is also a good specimen of the reactionary movements that go under the name of modernism; and like the reactionary movements in general, it looks to the future with glowing, if vague, enthusiasm, at the same time that it glorifies the present.

Lewis F. Hite.

THE BIBLE
THE REVELATION OF THE NEW AGE

By the Rev. William L. Worcester

IF we believe in God our Heavenly Father, who has created the world and us, and placed us here to live, then we must believe in a Word of God, a Bible, a message from God, to tell us what we need to know about Himself and about ourselves and our relation to Him, how to live to fulfill the purpose of our creation; the more so because we have reason to believe that without revelation we should have no knowledge of God and eternal life. "I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me." A loving parent would tell his children what they needed to know in a new and strange situation. Still more would our Heavenly Father tell His children of Himself and of His love for them, and of their nature, in His image and likeness, born for a short life in this world and for eternal development in heaven. He would warn them of the dangers of selfishness, and tell them of the safety and blessing of keeping near to Him, of living in His order, in ways of unselfish love and service. If the Heavenly Father must tell us these things, what we need to know to fulfill the purpose of our creation, then there must be a Word; there must always have been instruction from the Lord, adapted to every age and people. It may, in an innocent and heavenly time, in the golden age, have been given as perceptions of wisdom from within; it may have come as instruction by angels; at a later day it may have come by the voice of prophets; it may have been a written Word and a printed Word. The form may change, and has changed, but there must always be some Word, some message from the Lord to tell us of Himself and of the ways of safe and happy life.

It was made known to Swedenborg that there was an

Ancient Word existing and in use long before the days of Moses, written in symbol and parable, as was the custom of writing and speaking in that age. From this Ancient Word parts are preserved in our Scripture: brief fragments in the books of Numbers, Judges and Samuel; and the early chapters of Genesis, the first seven chapters precisely and the first eleven in substance. It was the Word of the church from which came Egyptian hieroglyphics and fables of other nations. Confirmation of the fact of this Ancient Word is found in the stories of Eden and the flood, so like our own, found in the remains of several nations, especially in those parts of the Near East which Swedenborg has indicated as the home of the church which possessed the Ancient Word.

This digression is to suggest that, not only in all ages, but with all peoples there has been a Word of God. There are other sacred literatures, in part from the same sources as our own. We are not forgetting that there are other sacred books through which the Lord speaks to other people, if we give special attention to the sacred Scriptures of the Jewish and the Christian Church. These are the Lord's Word to us. Moreover, the relation of these Scriptures to the Lord's life on earth gives them a unique interest and value, and is making them in a special sense the Scriptures of the world.

While it was to be expected that there would be a Word of the Lord, actually to hold in our hand a volume which claims to be that message, which we believe is that message, must fill us with awe! A message from heaven, from God, to tell us of Himself, of His love for us, of our relation to Him, to warn and to guide us, to draw aside the veil of the future and show toward what human life is moving! It is wonderful, almost incredible! The marvel that a Divine message can come down to our feeble, finite understanding, to touch our little, finite life. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth (saith the Lord), so

are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

At the heart of any message, of any word spoken or deed done, is some will and thought, the vital part of the word or act. The rest, the outward expression, is like the envelope of a letter to contain and convey the message. So in the Divine Word, as the soul and living part, is the Divine spirit, the Divine love and thought. It is amazing that this love and thought can be communicated to the little mind of man. But the Divine spirit and power can reach down through all the planes or degrees of the spiritual world, and all degrees of the natural world, even to the earth and the foundation rock. It has so reached down in the creation of these planes, and continues to reach down to sustain and make them live. The Divine so reaching down in creating all planes of the universe has prepared the way for the Divine Word to follow. The Word can follow wherever creation goes, for every created object on every plane is an expression of the Divine love and wisdom of the Creator. Even objects of the lowest natural plane are ready to lend themselves as types and symbols of the Divine and heavenly spirit within. So comes parable, Divine and heavenly content clothed and expressed in natural terms.

God speaks, and His Word contains a message for every plane of creation, from highest angel to lowest man. If we may think of angels listening as the Lord speaks to men, every one hears the message adapted to his ability to hear and understand; and the message in lowest form has all this heavenly and Divine light and power within it; it is throbbing with this inward life, heavenly and Divine. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

And this prepares us for this other marvel, that the Divine Word can be unfolded, have we but eyes to see and ears to hear its treasures, heavenly and Divine. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," our Lord often said.

It prepares us to see why our Lord needed not to set aside the old law with all its crudities and severities, but only to open it to reveal the heavenly and Christian message which it contained. He took the stern laws given to them of old time at Sinai, and opened them to reveal beatitudes and laws of love in the Sermon on the Mount. "Thou shalt not kill" became "Blessed are the merciful," etc. The old law of retaliation, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," which only gave limits to the natural spirit for revenge, became the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." It prepares us to see how the Lord could open the eyes of the disciples to understand the Scriptures, and could show to them in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms things concerning Himself.

We are agreed that the world is entering on a new age. The Lord is making all things new. New freedom, new opportunity and power, new problems, new dangers. Religion especially is being made new, and needs a Word of God adapted to the times. Some are ready to say that the Scriptures are out of date, full of crudities, immaturities, errors of the past; that it is time to discard them and to find a new Word adapted to the advancing states of the world. It would be with sorrow that we should lay the Bible aside; it would be with sorrow that the world would lay it aside. It has been and is such a power for good! It contains commandments of right which underlie all the world's best law. It spreads before the world a banner of promise and hope. It has brought strength and comfort at times of need; it has repelled the tempter, freed men's minds, brought comfort and courage to take up the duties of life and go forward. It has been to us, and more to saintly and heroic souls, a shrine of the Divine presence, to which to turn for a renewing of life. With all the seeming crudities and imperfections of Scripture, somehow the Lord is there; we find there touch with Him, and renewing

of our life. It would be giving up the best we have if we should discard the Bible.

But we may well doubt whether the Lord intends to give for this new age another and different Word, whether He may not rather again make the old Word new. When He came to usher in the age of Christian love (as we have seen), He did not destroy law and prophets, the crude, stern words to them of old time; He opened eyes to see and ears to hear, and showed within the ancient law the law of Christian love; He opened the ancient Scriptures and brought forth from them a new light, and power, for the needs of a new and upward step in the world's development. Are we sure that He may not do the same again? If our conception of the Word is true, it holds at its centre the very Divine love and wisdom and power of God, and has within it love and light for every plane of life, of heaven and earth, through which it passes in its descent to its expression in the language and symbols of this earth. The Lord knows best how a Divine Word shall be provided equal to the requirements of the new age, able to guide and to inspire the developments of the new age. But is it not possible that the Word of the new age is to be not another and a different book, but the old Word opened to new revealings of its indwelling light and power?

Such an unfolding would be the fulfilment of the hope and prophecy of some of the devoutest Christian men. John Robinson in his farewell words to the Pilgrims leaving Holland for New England expressed his confidence that "the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy Word," and charged them to be ready to receive it.

Such an unfolding of the Scriptures has, we believe, been made by the Lord, through the instrumentality of Emanuel Swedenborg. As you know, Swedenborg was a man of science, and is remembered for his thorough and penetrating work in the fields of metallurgy, physiology and philosophy. In his wide range of scientific research, Sweden-

borg was a profoundly reverent student, seeing all things of nature as works of God, expressions of God's love and wisdom. With penetrating insight in this study of nature and psychology, of brain and mind, he saw clearly that there are distinct planes of creation, one above or within another, which are related to each other by correspondence. In the physical body with its wonderful organs and functions he saw imaged the character and functions of the soul; and also, as in a smaller image, the organization and relations of humanity as a whole. And even while he was still busy with research in the field of nature, as a man of science he declared that he was studying a lower image of the higher realm of life which is the theme of Sacred Scripture. This was preparation for the day when he felt that the Lord called him to lay aside the study of nature for the study of the Scriptures, the Divine Word. He learned the Hebrew that he might read the Word in its own language, and made himself familiar with its letter, as is evidenced by his extensive indexes of Scripture subjects, made as a basis for profounder study. And then a new light began to shine upon the Scriptures, and new depths of meaning to unfold.

Dismiss from your minds absolutely the idea (if you have ever had it) that Swedenborg ingeniously devised an arbitrary system for interpreting the Scriptures—some artificial key, some cipher code, with which one can sit down as with a dictionary and translate the familiar text of Scripture into some new meaning. What Swedenborg has done is to see in the light given him by the Lord glimpses of the spiritual message which lies behind the letter, of the message which angels hear if they listen as the Lord speaks to us; and his key is the universal relation of natural things to the spiritual and Divine things which they express, and of which they therefore stand as types and symbols. He reads in the parables of nature, in parables of sunshine and storm, of desert and of cultivated fields, of gardeners planting seed, and of shepherds tending flocks—he reads in them

all lessons of our own inner life, and the inner life of all men. Even the story of men and of peoples becomes a part of the parable, and Egyptian bondage and desert wanderings and the promised land teach for us all lessons of spiritual bondage and deliverance, of spiritual privation, and of the fulness of the heavenly life.

You say that you have always read the Scripture so, that you have heard it so explained in sermons. Yes, in a measure so; but we are shown now the universalness of the principle of interpretation, and are shown in a thorough and scientific way the correspondence of nature with the inner world of spiritual experience. Called, as he believed, by the Lord to the office of unfolding Scripture, Swedenborg laid aside his scientific study and with it the hope of worldly honor, and gave himself during twenty-six of his ripest years to this higher work for which his scientific training and spiritual discipline and special illumination had prepared him. He patiently wrote and published the "Arcana Cœlestia," an exposition of Genesis and Exodus, a labor of eight years, and later made two studies of the Book of Revelation. It was his habit in studying one verse of Scripture to consider at the same time many other verses from all parts of Scripture where the same words and symbols occur, so that in explaining the first two and the last books of the Bible he has at the same time explained thousands of passages from all parts of Scripture, and has given principles of interpretation applicable to all parts. As the work of interpretation progressed, precious truths became clear concerning the Lord, and the Divine nature, concerning man and human nature, concerning the orderly life of men on earth and life in the eternal world, and after each great Scripture study these truths crystallized out and took form in smaller doctrinal books, fruits of the Scripture study.

A first effect of this unfolding of the Scriptures with those who follow Swedenborg in it, and recognize the beauty and the power of it, is to convince them that the

Scriptures are Divine, that they can never be discarded as out of date and to be left behind. The unfolding does, indeed, show a difference among the books usually included in our Bible; some have the fulness of Divine spirit and the continuous deeper sense, or rather senses, inward to the Divine, while other books are the writings of men, of the Lord's providence associated with the Divine books for the precious use they serve, but in themselves as different from the Word as an artificial flower which man makes is different from a living flower which is the work of God. A new canon of Scripture is thus established, new not only in the list of books which it includes, but new in principle. Books of the Word are not determined by authority and tradition, but by the fulness of their inspiration, the fulness of life which they contain.

The glimpse of inner meaning in the Lord's Word reveals a light, a glory, a wisdom relating to man's spiritual experience and to things Divine, which makes us sure that they are given from God, and are a fountain of wisdom of life which can never be exhausted however far men may advance in spiritual development, to whatever heights they may attain. We return from the inner vision of the Scriptures, to say as the Samaritan woman said of the Lord: "He told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The Book which reveals us to ourselves, and reveals to us the Lord and the possibilities of life with Him for ourselves and for mankind, can only be Divine. We return from the vision of the heavenly meaning of the Word, as Elisha returned when he had seen the horses and chariot of fire which bore his master into heaven, to take up the rough mantle of the letter with new realization of its Divineness and its power.

If for no other value, I commend to you the opening of Scriptures in the works of Swedenborg for this, that it shows the Lord's Word to be Divine, with proof that is untouched by scoffer or hostile critic. It shows crudities of science in the letter of the Scripture, historical errors

if there be such, and even low standards of morality granted by Moses in evil days for the hardness of men's hearts, and low conceptions of God as angry and revengeful—it shows all these (like the language in which the Word is given) to be taken from the minds of men as a garment in which the Word may reach them in their low and evil state. Within, the Word is perfect, light and love, as our Lord showed it when He opened the laws of old time in the Sermon on the Mount. Though men despise and rend the the letter of the Word, its outer garment, the heavenly truth above the letter is an inner garment which they cannot rend. The Divine Word will stand as the Word of the new age, and will keep its place in the van of progress. We can still go to it for light and strength and comfort as in the past; it will still be meat and drink to hungry souls; and however far we advance it will still hold before us visions of possibility to lead us on.

It remains to speak more definitely, but briefly, of the nature of the unfolding of the Word which marks it as Divine and insures its place as the Word of the new age.

Every part of Scripture, in its deepest sense, is about the Lord. So Swedenborg declares, and so it must be, because at its heart every Divine message is something of the Divine love and the Divine wisdom. And every part of Scripture in senses less deep is about the spiritual development and experience of mankind and of every member of the human family.

In his "Arcana Cœlestia," the exposition of Genesis and Exodus, Swedenborg opens to us the spiritual history of the early peoples of this earth, in the childhood of the race. There are in the story of Eden, and of Noah after the flood, beautiful pictures of those states of early innocence. But those people had their temptations and fell into evil ways, as pictured in the temptation by the serpent and eating of the forbidden fruit, in the flood, and in the tower of Babel. Incidentally in connection with this spiritual history of the race in its beginning there are told many lovely

things about the innocent states of infancy and the value of that touch with heaven in the experience of older years.

With the story of Abram and his family we come to literal history, history which invites the student of the past to interesting research; but more than this it is a history chosen by the Lord to furnish material for a wonderful parable of life. At this point in his exposition Swedenborg turns to a deeper plane of application, the application to the Lord in His incarnation and Divine life with men. Experiences of His childhood are unfolded from the story, of His eager acquiring of the outward forms of knowledge into which the Divine light and love might flow; of His temptations and victories even as a child, by which He began the redeeming of mankind; and of the gradual uniting of His humanity with the Divinity within, making Himself fully Savior, and establishing His saving presence with men on earth forever. Following the pictures of the Divine childhood are pictures of the development of the youthful power of reason with the trials and victories which it brings. And with these insights into the development of our Lord's human life are many practical, helpful references to the analogous states of our own development. In the chapters of the "Arcana Cœlestia" giving this unfolding of the story of the Patriarchs from Abraham to Joseph, there is more insight into the inner development of our Lord's earthly life, and more practical psychology of human life than will be found in libraries of books.

There is preciousness in this revealing of ourselves. It is a part of the experience which sends us from the Bible saying, "He told me all that ever I did; is not this Divine?" And if our consciousness of higher spiritual life is awakening, as it should be awakening in this new age, this teaching from the deeper meaning of the Scripture is interesting and practically useful.

The insight into the deeper experiences of our Lord's life is also very precious, supplementing the Gospel records

and disclosing many things which were not known to the disciples, increasing our opportunity to know and love Him.

Passing on in the Old Testament an interesting instance of the unfolding of the Christian from the Jewish law is found in study of the laws of sacrifice. Such interpretation is pointed to by our Lord when He sent the Pharisees to their own law to read, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and in many other Scriptures which declare that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. The Lord set aside the barbaric slaying of animals in worship, but He points to the Christian meaning of the sacrifices, commanded in such minute detail. As we become able to apply to these laws of sacrifice the principle of interpretation which unfolds the Christian, the spiritual, meaning in the parables and histories of Scripture, these laws will become descriptions of the affections of humility and trustfulness and service and thanksgiving which we ought to bring to the Lord in various states of life. Even now we can all recognize in the lamb offered morning and evening at the temple, a symbol of the trustful affection toward the Lord with which we should begin and close each day, and every undertaking. There is practical wisdom of Christian living and Christian worship to unfold to us in all the laws of sacrifice, in their outward form so repulsive, and seeming long since to have lost their value. There is in these Christian wisdom to unfold as in the new age we advance enough in love of God and love of man to understand and value it. A part of Scripture which we might have been ready to discard and leave behind if we were editing a Bible for the new age, is in fact in advance of us, not behind us, awaiting our growth in love to God and man to value it.

As an example of deeper lessons of the Lord's own life now unfolding to us in the Scriptures, there are the Psalms, and we remember how on Easter Day the Lord opened to the disciples in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms things concerning Himself, and how the disciples bore

witness to the preciousness of the experience, saying, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" I would not undervalue a literary study of the Psalms. It is full of interest to every reverent reader; also the Psalms are far greater than the events in David's life, or in the life of Israel, for which they were first composed and sung. They are felt by every reverent reader to be universal songs, expressing joys and sorrows, despair and triumph of every human heart. For that we love them. But they are still more sacred and still more precious when they voice for us emotions of the Lord's own heart in His life with us on earth, when they reveal to us depths of humility and heights of rejoicing in the temptations and victories of His life. There are Psalms which are as precious to us as any chapters of the Gosepl, like the crucifixion Psalm, the 22nd, which presents that last trial of the Lord's life as vividly as any Gospel; but it does not stop with this; it goes on in words of triumph to rejoice in a blessing to reach to the ends of the earth and to generations to be born. The Psalm gives an insight more than the Gospels into the inward peace and triumph of the crucifixion hour. And so of many single Psalms, as those which profess an innocence such as no mortal ever had, and those which profess a dependence upon the Divine Word for guidance and for the food and drink of the spirit which has never been realized except in the Lord's own life. So of many single Psalms, and so of the Psalmbook as a whole as it advances from the simple pastoral Psalms of David, through Psalms of conflict and temptation to the Hallelujah Psalms, and Psalms of thanksgiving. The Psalmbook, like the great heart of the Scripture, is throbbing with the Lord's own love, to make our hearts burn as we read, and to bring us into tune with the songs of heaven.

No one of you who believes that the new age is to be a religious age, and that it is to be an age of increasing love to the Lord and to one another, can think of the Bible

of the new age as being without the Gospels. They are the world's clearest revelation of the Lord, and of the life of love and service which we may live with Him. If the new age is new in any real sense, it is because it is beginning to live the Christian life which the Gospels offer; because it is beginning to know the Savior and salvation in a real and present way; because it is beginning with the Lord's help to apply the Golden Rule to the world's affairs; because it is beginning to think of Christianity in larger than personal terms, to think of Christian society and Christian nations. If the age is new it is because it is beginning to take the Gospel seriously and to live the Christian life. It is beginning, but only beginning. How far it is from realizing in individual and common life all that the Gospel teaches! How far from being able to cast aside the Gospel as an exhausted message, a fruit from which the meat has all been taken! The new age, if it is to fulfil its promise, needs a fuller acquaintance with the Divine Human personality which stands at the centre of the Gospel. It needs a deeper understanding of His life and works and teaching. It needs a more courageous and more persistent effort to walk with Him and in His steps. For the new age to discard the Gospel would be for it to discard the very thing which is making and will make it new.

One other book of Scripture must stand as peculiarly the Divine message for the new age, the Revelation, the last book of our Bible. This was the subject of Swedenborg's second great Bible study. After expounding Genesis and Exodus in the "Arcana," and after the doctrinal works which grew from that study, Swedenborg applied himself to the Revelation, making two great studies of the book, one of which he published. Modern scholarship has found much pleasure and much profit in studying the strange symbolism of this book, discovering as far as may be what the symbols meant to John and fellow-Christians of his day, when the Church was suffering under terrible persecutions from

Rome and the heathen priesthood. Is the Revelation then a book of an age gone by, which has served its use and can be laid aside, save for its historical interest? Far from it. The same light and the same principles of interpretation which showed to Swedenborg such precious lessons of the Lord's life and of Christian life in the books of the Old Testament, showed to him in this last book of Scripture a lesson of judgment and of the Lord's kingdom, which is of universal value, and which in its application to present and coming changes in the world about us make the Book of Revelation almost a handbook of the new age. The visions which John saw in Patmos "signified" events to come, events we believe which have in a degree been realized in the spiritual world and are now working themselves out in this world, making a new heaven and a new earth, a new age.

The book opens with a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to John, tenderly human yet gloriously Divine, standing in the midst of His Church in heaven and on earth. In the tender appeal of the second and third chapters, to the seven churches, we have the Divine appeal to all who will to know Him and to dwell in the sunshine of His presence. For the full realization of this invitation and promise, we must turn to the last chapters of the book. We find it there in the vision of the Holy City descending out of heaven from God, with gates open to all those who will walk in its ways of love and rejoice in its light. Here is the promised kingdom of Heaven upon earth, to which prophets were looking, which our Lord Himself showed in His life of love and service, whose laws He taught in the Sermon on the Mount and in all His preaching. The Lord Jesus Christ reigns, and in the sunshine of His presence and in the ways of Christian love and service all sorrow and pain are ended, all tears are wiped away.

And what of the chapters of this book of Revelation which come between the vision of the Lord and His invitation in opening of the book, and the vision of the

Holy City with which it closes? These chapters are filled with scenes of judgment; they tell of the evil passions of human hearts and the false thoughts of human minds, which come between us and the Lord and hold us back from Him, and of the Lord's power to overcome and to remove them. Now and again the dark clouds part, revealing glimpses of the coming glory. This judgment has been accomplished in the spiritual world—a clearing of the skies, allowing the Lord's love and light to strike through into this natural world with new quickening power. This accounts in part for the new freedom in the world; for the new urge to discovery and invention, and to new achievement. And under this impulse the same judgment is taking place on earth. Do we realize that in these days of rapid changes, of hideous exposures of selfishness, and at the same time of new developments of human sympathy and brotherhood on a scale before undreamed of—do we realize that in the midst of these great dangers and great possibilities of blessing, we have a Divine message given to guide us safely, to show us in the confusion the Lord's hand working to establish His kingdom of love and service and blessing among men? The book of Revelation is peculiarly a book for the new age. Already it has been and is a source of courage and hope to thousands. As we learn to read more fully the Divine message in its symbols and parables, this last book of Scripture will prove itself a veritable handbook of instruction for the new age, showing us what the Lord is doing and what we must do with Him for the establishment of His kingdom."

The world has entered on a new age. We cannot doubt it. And the new age needs a Word, a message of protection and guidance and instruction from the Lord. Never was such a message needed more. While those who recognize this need stand doubting, doubting whether to reject the old Word as having served its use (a Word for a crude, unscientific age), and to expect a new Word to fall

glittering from heaven, or to evolve itself in human minds, the Lord Himself has acted and has met the need: He has by the hand of a chosen servant repeated the miracle of the Sermon on the Mount: he has made us know that the Word already given has in it love and truth Divine, and a message of Divine wisdom to every plane and degree of human development in earth and heaven; He has opened the Word anew, the Word which has so endeared itself to generations of men and women in the past, and has to thousands of heavenward pilgrims and to whole races proved its power. He has opened the Word anew to give what the world needs for its guidance in a new age, a new revealing of Himself, a new revealing of the Christian law in its application to individual life and to larger social life, a new revealing of what He has done and is doing in heaven and in earth for the establishing of His Kingdom. Out of the old Word, the Word long tried and loved, the new light shines to light before us the path of the new age. One goes before us in the march of progress, and the host of heaven follow, and the host on earth of men and women who hope and work for progress, who are ready to give themselves head and heart and hand for the uplifting of humanity, who are ready to give their lives to make men better and the world happier; and the name of the leader of the hosts of progress—it is not wealth, nor learning, nor statesmanship, nor business enterprise: "his name is called 'The Word of God.'"

William L. Worcester.

JESUS CHRIST THE LORD OF THE NEW AGE

By the Rev. John Goddard

WHAT place will Jesus Christ fill in the religion and life of the future? Granting that we are living in the beginning of a new age of spiritual progress which should equal its material and mental development, what conception of the Founder of Christianity will make for the broadest, deepest, truest Christian character?

Two general concepts of the Divine Personality of Jesus have been held in the church of the past. The one was preeminently a faith of the heart, prevailing perhaps during the first two centuries. The other was preeminently a faith of the intellect, propounded by the first world's council of the churches, called together in the fourth century, to answer the question, "Who was Christ?"

The first reply to this vital question was given by the Savior Himself to the eleven disciples in His last interview with them in the large upper room in Jerusalem where He kept the passover with them the night before His crucifixion, as told in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. He declared it, but did not explain it.

The disciples had learned to love Him. But now, their hearts were made sad when He said that He was going away. They had been expecting all along that He was to establish the promised Jewish kingdom. But now He said that He was going away—going to the Father from whom He came, and they must follow Him. But how could they follow Him, if they did not know the way? He replied that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The only way to the Father, or to God, was through Him. Then came Philip's request: "Shew us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." They had doubtless been thinking of God all along, according to their Jewish conception, as the one, in-

visible, stern, severe, jealous, Deity—one to be feared, not loved in any personal way—one utterly different from Him Whom they had learned to love. But now came that memorable answer to Philip's entreaty to show them the Father: "Have I been with you so long without your knowing me? He who has seen me, has seen the Father"—has seen God. That is, Jesus brings God to view.

You will doubtless say that this was *no explanation.* True, it was no explanation to the intellect apart from the heart. But have you not noticed that the Gospels never touch questions on philosophy apart from the heart, unless in the first chapter of John's Gospel? The disciples could not have received Him through the intellect. They were simple fishermen. Nor will the time ever come when the intellect *alone* will receive Him, but only when the heart is the moving power. The intellect must always be secondary.

But here was the moving power in the early church—*the practical identity of God and Jesus Christ.* If they knew Him, they would know the Father. Hence, in the apostolic writings, we have this simple explanation of Jesus: He was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person." That is, He was not a separate Person, but a Revealer of the One Divine Person. "This," the Apostle continues, "is the true God and eternal life." And this accords with the first chapter of John: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath [literally translated] led Him out, made Him visible," or "brought Him forth to view."

Granting that there may have lingered unconsciously in the background of those early disciples' minds a picture of the stern Jewish Deity, that which separated them from Judaism, the power which led them to go into all the world and preach the glad tidings to every creature, that which enabled them to conquer the Roman empire, was this realization, attested by the heart, that Jesus is the Revealer

of the character, the Personality, the Presence, the Humanity, the Power, the Love, of the One God. Love is always the conquering power. It was the conviction that God was love, that His very life was the life of loving self-sacrifice, which enabled them to bear the cross of suffering, persecution, and shame, in His name and strength.

This then was the original thought of the early church respecting Christ. He simply revealed the spirit, the purpose, the presence, the Power of God. God, then, was Love.

We recall the tradition of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who was converted to the belief in Christianity as the coming religious faith, that he saw the cross in the heavens, and with it the words, "*In hoc signo vinces,*" or, "In this sign you conquer." However Constantine may have interpreted it, we know now that the cross is self-denial, and the cross of Jesus tells us that God Himself is self-denial Itself. In Him is no love of rule, no selfish demand for human worship. His very life is the love of giving Himself to others. Hence the sacrament: "This is my body; this is my blood." The gift of Himself is His very life.

This was the power of the early church, however unexplained or crudely held. God was Love. God and Christ were one, at least in purposes. But this state of loving faith gradually changed when philosophy invaded the church, and the intellect demanded an answer to the question, "Who was Christ?" It is a long story, too long to consider now. In brief, a world council of the churches was called to answer the question. The answer was that Jesus, a separate Divine Power from the Supreme God, and His Eternal Son, was made a sacrifice to appease the wrath of the Father for human sin, and the Father accepted the great sacrifice as an atonement for the sins of all who believed. With this decision of the council, held at the city of Nice in the year 325, gradually arose the ecclesiastical claim of authority, the papal claim of power to enforce the church's decrees, leading eventually to the Inquisition, and the burning of heretics at the stake! And this in the name

of the one, apostolic church, which was founded originally upon the discovery that God was Love!—upon Jesus's own final declaration, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Here then were the two opposing conceptions of Jesus Christ held in the church of the past. The one was voiced by the apostle Paul: "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world to Himself*"; the other, in brief, was this: God *reconciled Himself to the world* through the atonement for human sin made by His Son, and through the acceptance of His Son by believers through their faith in that great sacrifice.

While very many in the churches still cling to this foundation of faith, it is fast losing its power. What will take its place? What will be the thought about Jesus in the faith of the future?

There are leaders in the churches who are openly declaring that a new prophet is needed. There are others who, like Dr. Frank Crane in his work, "Why I am a Christian," maintain that nothing is needed except to carry the plain principles of Jesus into all our daily affairs. He declares that he is a Christian not because he knows the Christ story is true, but because it brings beneficial effects when he acts as if it were true. He rejects both the fear of hell and the hope of heaven as motives, believing that righteousness is its own testimony and brings its own reward.

While we cannot help sympathizing deeply with his attitude, we cannot help questioning whether it will have the power to reach the thoughtful of mankind in this age of freedom, especially in view of the negative criticism which is unsettling the old faith in the Scripture, and even raising the question whether Jesus Christ as an actual being ever existed—whether He may not be a mythical character.

We are led by the language of Jesus Himself to look forward to a new prophecy—a new explanation of Him. For while He appears to uphold the position of Dr. Crane

in the words: "If ye continue in my word, ye are my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"; or as when He says, "He that doeth God's will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," yet we cannot overlook those other words:

> I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth, and will shew you things to come.

Nor can we overlook these words:

> These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs but I will shew you plainly of the Father.

And still again: "The Son of Man shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," this picture of an advent in the clouds being echoed again and again in both testaments. The adventists have forgotten the word "proverbs" or "allegories" when they look for the advent in literal clouds.

Can we not see at least a possible connection between coming in the clouds with glory, and removing the obscurities by the light of truth? Can we not see its harmony with the promise to be shown plainly of the Father instead of being taught in proverbs, that is, allegories or symbols? In other words, is not this promise "to come in clouds" in harmony with those words in the Bible's last book: "The mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets"?

Swedenborg comes as the new prophet. He shows us plainly of the Father. He shows us the promise of Jesus shining through the clouds of the Bible, showing how that holy book is an allegory of the Divine life which Jesus lived. Swedenborg reveals the face of the one and only God—the God of Love—shining in those dark, clouded, allegorical stories throughout the Old Testament. In short, this new prophet—this "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," as he called himself—brings us back to the original concep-

tion of Jesus, as revealed by Himself to the disciples in that large upper room when He said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Only *now the explanation is given; the mystery is finished.* The intellect unites with the heart. Authority is superseded by the light of the truth—the truth which, as Jesus said, makes men free.

In brief, this revelation reaffirms the Gospel statement of the virgin birth. It declares that God Himself was the Father of the soul of Jesus, who inherited from the human race through Mary the tendencies to all evils, and that *this inheritance brought with it the consciousness for a time of a distinct and separate personality;* but when those evil tendencies were conquered through the power of His Divine Soul, His full unity with God was restored, and the Divine life took the place of what was taken from man, so that now He dwells near to man in that Divine and glorified Humanity. Moreover, in overcoming those inherited evils, He overcame the powers of hell which tempted Him, and so restored to man the freedom which had been lost—freedom and power to overcome evil in His name and strength. Hence the Savior's words: "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven"; Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions," etc.

This revelation thus restores that one great foundation truth of the Bible and of human reason: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." It also explains the Divine trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as pictured in the threefold nature of man (made in His image and likeness), namely, soul, body, and action; that is, the Infinite God, whom no man hath seen at any time, the Divine Humanity revealed in the glorified Person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as His actual Presence with all, but especially with those who love and obey His Divine laws of life, the vital and earthly foundations of which are laid in the Decalogue. In shunning the evils here revealed, not as obstacles to success, or for a good reputation, not even as

a passport to heaven, or an insurance against hell, but as sins against God and the neighbor, the work of regeneration begins.

We are prepared now for a reply to our first inquiry: "What place will Jesus Christ hold in the religious faith and life of the future?"

Notwithstanding the passing of the old form of faith in Christ established by church councils; notwithstanding the destructive influences of the Higher Criticism; notwithstanding the subtle appeal to our worldly reason of the mythical theory which would destroy the historical foundation of the Gospel, one form of faith in Jesus Christ as the Leader in the way of life remains unshaken. The cry in the churches for a new prophet, who shall make Him and His teachings plain to the understanding, is accompanied by the cry, "Back to Christ!" If the one is *an appeal or prayer for light—the light of truth*—the other is *an appeal from the heart and an appeal to the life from the heart.* In any case, Jesus Christ is more of a necessity than ever among all who are not slaves of self or the world, or else despairing or indifferent. This prevailing recognition of the necessity of Jesus Christ today was voiced by the gentle Quaker poet:

> The healing of His seamless dress
> Is by our bed of pain;
> We touch Him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again.
> O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
> We test our lives by Thine.

Voiced also by that radical preacher, Theodore Parker, who, in my early days, was often called an unbeliever:

> Yes! Thou art still the Life; Thou art the Way
> The holiest know—Light, Life, and Way of heaven;
> And they who dearest hope, and deepest pray,
> Toil by the light, life, way, which Thou hast given.

Yes, He will be a necessity, because His is the appeal to the heart and the highest life of man.

But without the new Prophet, the prayer of the understanding remains unanswered. Yet, in the present and future age of unshackled freedom and reason, both prayers must be answered. The age of blind authority is past.

We believe the new Prophet has appeared. He has, first of all, brought us back to the original thought of Jesus as revealed by Himself in those memorable words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Thus in the new Prophet, Emanuel Swedenborg, is also fulfilled the cry, "Back to Christ!"

Again: he explains the prophecy of the second advent in the clouds as involving the explanation of the "proverbs" or mysteries of the Scripture, the law of Divine symbolism or "correspondence" by which it was written, bringing to view the meaning and nature of the Divine Incarnation which is prophesied there, even as the Savior asserted but did not explain it, when, after His resurrection, He pointed out to His disciples "the things concerning Himself in Moses, the prophets and the Psalms." Swedenborg's explanation fulfils the promise that in the Lord's Second Coming the disciples should be shown plainly of the Father, and the promise in the last book of the Bible that "the mystery of God shall be finished." All this is involved in the symbol of the Lord's coming in the clouds of heaven with light or glory.

Moreover, the mystery connected with the thought of death, the resurrection, and the future life has been removed from the minds of all who believe in Swedenborg's mission. For the opening of his mind to the deeper meaning of the Scripture was accompanied by an opening of the eyes and other senses of his spiritual body, enabling him to mingle freely with the inhabitants of the spiritual world for twenty-eight years, and to study its phenomena with the same care with which he had studied the faces of this

world during his earlier life as a master in natural sciences. He solves also the former mystery of the connection between soul and body, and the spiritual and natural worlds. He thus fulfils the promise: "When the Spirit of Truth appears, He will guide you into all truth, and will show you things to come."

This brings us, finally, to the answer to the second question with which we began; namely, What conception of the Person and character of Jesus will make for the truest Christian character in the new age?

Our reply is, "The conception which Swedenborg has given." But we must distinguish well between the effect upon the mere thought and the effect upon the heart and life.

Does it not appeal to a far deeper and nobler motive for right living to know or believe that the love of Jesus is the love of God Himself, than to believe that He was made a sacrifice to God's wrath? Is it not truer and nobler to do right because it is God's loving way than because it is the way of escape from a hell of punishment? Does it not make for a better character to be left free from fear, free from a compelling authority, choosing the way of love to others from a consciousness that the spirit of the Human and Personal God of love and of helpfulness is close at hand—waiting and knocking at the door of our hearts, ready to enter when we open the door through obedience accompanied by prayer? Here is the God whom Swedenborg teaches us to follow: God in the Divine Humanity of the glorified Jesus.

But only a heart belief on our part will open the door to His Spirit. The intellectual acceptance alone will have no power. It will only point out the way. Faith, when genuine, is of the heart. It is love. It is the spirit which looks away from self to the One who alone is good and wise and strong. A real belief in Jesus Christ is the willingness to co-operate with Him. It is willing to obey the laws of

love, of justice, of kindness, of helpfulness. It is willing and desirous to incorporate this effort at co-operation into all the actions, all the thoughts, all the purposes, of the common daily life. A true faith in Jesus Christ as the one God leads us to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven. For faith, in Swedenborg's definition, is the recognition of truth springing from an inward love of truth; so that, when truth is heard, it is *recognized* as one would recognize a friend in a crowd of strangers. For all religion is primarily and chiefly a matter of life, and its life is to do good.

Yet life *as action* is not all. The religion of the new age must be one which addresses the reason as well as the heart. Only the truth, when understood, can fulfil the Savior's words: "The truth will make you free." When we are truly free, the mystery of our lives is removed. The promise of our Lord will be fulfilled: "When He (the Holy Spirit) is come, He will guide you into all truth." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who, through His servant, is guiding us into all truth, and shewing us things to come. Jesus Christ, as Swedenborg reveals Him, will set men free from the bondage of selfishness and worldliness, the bondage of the senses, the bondage of time and space, the bondage of mystery and shadows, and make them free indeed.

Jesus Christ glorified is the one God. Here is the final summing up of His servant's message to the world:

"The Lord Jesus Christ reigns, whose dominion shall be for ages of ages," as told in those crowning words of Scripture prophecy:

> I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of heaven One like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him next before Him. And there was given unto Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

JOHN GODDARD.

CENTRALIZATION OF POWER

By William Warren Towle

IN determining the form of government and establishing the rules and regulations which were to control the destinies of our people then coming into a new freedom, the framers of the American Constitution were enabled not only to act in the light of the existing conditions of this country, its objects and environments, but had before them the experiences of the governments of other people from the earliest periods of civilized man as examples of those methods which in the past had been productive of national strength and success and of those which had led to downfall.

In the annals of many ancient nations is found the recognition of certain rights and privileges as belonging in common to all human beings, the deprivation of which, if long continued, almost inevitably led to war and bloodshed. With the expulsion of the last of the Tarquins, in the fifth century before the Christian Era, the reign of the Roman kings came to an end; and it was not long after the establishment of the Roman Republic that a popular demand was made for some definite system of written laws. The document afterwards to be known as that of the Twelve Tables was adopted, having been agreed to by the patricians and the plebeians equally. This code of law was inscribed on tablets, and hung in the Forum in plain sight of all the people. The boys at school were required to commit the code to memory. These laws though simple and crude contained the principles upon which all Roman jurisprudence was founded, and were destined to receive the praise and veneration of historians, poets and statesmen. Tacitus, Livy, Horace and Cicero, delighted to extol their virtues. The principles of this code were brought by the Roman into ancient Britain, where they have continued to obtain throughout the whole course of English law. Thus in the adoption of the statutes and the common law of the Mother

Country, as far as they were applicable to American Institutions, this country imbibed much of this ancient idea of right and justice. While much of the Roman code would seem rather out of date in these days, yet a careful study of the principles involved show an abundance of good sense and much intrinsic merit.

The founders of the American government, having been brought up under English laws, recognized the principles of justice contained in former great liberty charters, bills of rights, and statutes, and wisely incorporated many of these principles in the new system. The structure of English law rests on no written constitution. It has always been the boast of that law-making power that customs, traditions, and the spirit of bills of rights, charters and the like, have been the true guidance in directing and conserving legislation, rather than the provisions of any written rules. This, however, has not always proved true. In many instances the English parliament has gone so far astray from long established principles that custom and precedent have at times seemed to have been entirely set aside. In the fourteenth century the English parliament was accused of going very far beyond its unwritten bounds. In his tract *"De Officio Regis,"* Wyclif argues for a "world and a church that have little law other than the law of God laid down in the Holy Scriptures, of which law neither civilians nor canonists, but theologians are the custodians and interpreters."

There was little of what might be termed strictly judicial administration in our earlier colonial polity. In New England the clergy were supreme. The first American code adopted in Massachusetts in 1641 was drawn by a commission consisting mainly of clergymen who acted under instruction to bring in a draft "agreeable to the word of God." The code declared, as did a statute in 1739, that in all matters not expressly provided for, "the ground of decision, was to be found not in the common law but in the word of God." A clergyman was Chief Justice of Pennsylvania as late as 1739-1743. There was no considerable

influence of lawyers until just before the Revolution. Acts of adjudication by the officials of the colonies were justified by Scriptural citations. At the close of the Revolution it was generally agreed that some definitely established foundation must be laid for the superstructure of the laws which were henceforth to direct the new government. The thirteen colonies were to become states bound together under a constitution which guaranteed them individuality and the right of local self-rule, except so far as necessary powers were given to the central government under the express provision that "all powers not delegated to Congress by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, were reserved to the states or to the people." The original document was adopted Sept. 17th, 1787. It consisted of but seven articles.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution were offered at the first session of the first Congress. Coming so near the original action, those may well be considered as in the nature of perfecting amendments. The eleventh amendment became a part of the Constitution in 1789, and the twelfth in 1803, after which a period of sixty-five years elapsed before any further changes or additions were made. The thirteenth and fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were annexed as a result of the Civil War. There was no further change in the Constitution for the next forty years, or until the adoption of the Income Tax provision in 1909. Then followed in 1913 the seventeenth amendment providing for the election of United States Senators by popular vote. The eighteenth amendment, pertaining to the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, and the nineteenth extending the right of suffrage to women, are of so recent adoption as to need no comment here. With the exception of the seventeenth, changing the method of electing United States senators, and the eighteenth, relating to prohibition, the amendments since the first ten were adopted have been principally of the nature of additions to the Constitution, rather than substantial changes of existing articles or of its spirit. With these few additions and changes in the

organic law of this land, the country has prospered under its governmental system, which has gone on for more than one hundred and thirty years. Its population during this time has increased from three million to one hundred and ten million inhabitants; and it has become one of the greatest of world powers.

On last Armistice Day, in an address, the first of a series of Page Memorial Lectures, given in memory of the former American ambassador to Great Britain, Sir Auckland Geddes, former British ambassador to Washington, in describing the United States as "one of the great stable empires of the world," told an audience of three thousand at Westminster Hall, London, "how profoundly American thought was influencing the United Kingdom, and, to an even greater extent, the British dominions." Among other things, he said:

> The British dominions that look out on the Pacific feel that in Washington there is an instinctive understanding of their difficulties which, when they come to London, they have to explain laboriously in Downing Street. . . . The far-flung British Empire has yielded the leadership of the world, in many respects, to the compact empire of the United States.

He cited the Washington Arms Conference as an example. Premier Baldwin, a guest, declared that "the proper solution of the question of Anglo-American relations, meant the peace of the world."

At the present time there seems to be a feeling prevalent in some quarters of the country that the Constitution as it now exists is inadequate for the needs of the country, that new provisions should be made either changing or wholly doing away with many of the fundamentals of this most comprehensive bulwark of the people's rights. It is encumbent upon those seeking these changes to show wherein the Constitution has served the country ill, and in what way the propositions they advance would clearly work improvement, and further that such changes would not subvert long established individual rights.

The Constitution originally proceeded from the people

themselves, and was not the invention of any group of lawyers. In the wisdom of the fathers the government was made to consist of three heads, the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial. Most of the amendments proposed at the present time are for the purpose of conferring more power on the central government or Congress. It is said that there are nearly a hundred of such proposals now pending in Congress itself.

Under the present system of government the United States of America is a republic endowed with all the attributes of a democracy. Local self government is the purest form of democracy. Every power given to the central government as a rule takes so much away from the right to exercise local control. A system which takes away local rights is invariably followed by a lapsing of individual responsibility in public affairs on the part of the citizenship, which continues until the exigency of some occasion awakens the populace into undesirable activity.

The Supreme Court of the nation seems at present to be the target for attack by constitutional amendment. From the time of its establishment there have been one hundred seventy-five judges appointed to the Supreme Bench. These have been men of high character, learned not only in the legal profession but also having a comprehensive knowledge and conception of the principles of government from ancient times; men trained in the traditions and historic courses which have brought about organic law, and in the reasons why the eternal fundamental principles of human right and justice must be recognized in the enactment of law; men cognizant of the history of events, wherein the failures as well as the successes of mankind have to be taken into account. Men of such a character are required to pass upon questions of constitutional measures, just as the conduct of a railroad must be by men especially trained in railroad matters. In the entire history of the Supreme Court, impeachment proceedings (which were unsuccessful) have been brought in but one case.

One of the main causes of grievance against the Supreme

Court is its having declared certain laws enacted by Congress unconstitutional. Since its establishment this Court has decided that forty-nine of the acts of Congress were unconstitutional. Chronologically there were three in the first seventy years of its existence, and forty-six in the next sixty years, of which twenty-two have occurred in the last twenty years.

Another reason assigned for most of the recently proposed amendments has been the expected passage of some measure repugnant to the provisions of the Constitution. Some of these sought-for amendments would go so far as to make Congress itself the final court to decide upon the constitutionality of its own acts. Of the proposed amendments now prominently before the public mind are those relating to the regulation of child labor, the supervision of education, maternity matters, and other subjects over which the several states have up to this time had control. This assumption of authority by the central government over any of these matters is of grave concern; for if eventually acquired, the effect would be so far reaching as to undermine the Constitution itself; and no one can predict the consequences if such changes were made. The overwhelming advisory vote against the child labor amendment a short time ago shows plainly that the people of Massachusetts think themselves fully qualified to control the welfare of their own children without congressional assistance.

Local conditions as a rule are best understood and acted upon by those immediately interested in the welfare of the various communities. Hard and fast rules applicable to all parts of the country are bound to work injustice and hardship, if not to retard or prevent altogether reforms which suitable local regulation would otherwise have accomplished.

Lincoln said, "If by mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might in a moral point of view justify a revolution; it certainly would, if such right were a vital one."

Because some of the states fall behind others in placing upon their statute books certain legislation conforming to advanced ideas, is no reason that the Constitution should provide for the establishment by Congress of a paternal system of law for this country, only to be followed by that local discontent, irritability and relaxation of responsibility which is always brought about by the removal of the right of local control in matters affecting local interests.

Congress is now endowed with seemingly sufficiently broad powers of legislation without much further change in the provisions of the Constitution. Additions may properly be made from time to time; but changes almost always take away authority and responsibility which should be attached to the local governments. The police power exercised by the several states is broad Under it regulations may be enforced relating to the safety, health, morals, and general welfare of the public. It is not subject to any definite limitations, but is coextensive with the necessities of the case and the safe-guarding of public interests. It has also to take account of the risks that arise from the use of new inventions applying the forces of nature in previously unknown ways.

In times of political disturbances and of more or less generality of thought, the clear presentation to the public mind of the fundamental principles laid down in the Constitution is of supreme importance. In order that the individual rights of the citizen may not be wrongfully intruded upon either by the executive, or by temporary majorities in legislative bodies, proper checks and balances between the power of Congress and government by the states are wisely provided for in the document itself, and any disturbance of these is of serious moment.

There are centralizations of power *apart* from the government, which, without detracting from the individuality of human responsibility, work for the good of man and the establishment of grand ideals, the bringing about of a great human brotherhood of man, of social uplift, and even the enactment of wholesome legislation.

Objection is often raised to the active participation by the churches and religious organizations in politics, and to their bringing their combined strong influence to the support and furtherance of legislation. It is argued that the churches should have to do only with the spiritual affairs of men and communities.

All law is supposed to be founded on the Ten Commandments or upon Scriptural commands, injunctions or prohibitions. No legislative body cares to be accused of passing laws which are not in accord with a moral code of action. There is hardly any more forcible way of presenting measures for legislative action than by the intelligent and well-considered petitions of united Christian organizations.

The contention that the Church should refrain from such activity is not well founded. Civil order is first necessary for the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom on the earth. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the Lord.

A short time ago there was unveiled at Washington an equestrian statue of Bishop Francis Asbury, "a pioneer of Christianity who carried also the makings of an empire in his saddlebags," who is described in a resolution of Congress as "a pioneer itinerant, whose continuous journeys through our cities, towns and villages and early settlements, from 1771 to 1816, greatly promoted the interests of patriotism, education, morality and religion, and was a distinct aid to the American Republic." In his remarks at the unveiling of this statue President Coolidge declared:

> Our government rests on religion . . . . It was because of what Bishop Asbury preached, and what other religious organizations through their ministry preached, that our country has developed so much freedom, and contributed so much to the civilization of the world.

Church organizations working singly can accomplish but little in the promotion of law and order; but with power combined to that end, temporal order may be maintained and (not along doctrinal lines) the cause of righteousness

be enhanced, the darker side of the onward march of civilization brightened and distressing social conditions relieved. Such activities on the part of the Church are what will save its own exterior organization.

Under lawful permission entertainments of all kinds occupy the Sabbath Day. Only thirty-five per cent of the people of this country attend church at all. The conventions of society no longer require the attribute of religion in a person. Society generally is apparently indifferent to the need of Christian ideals in the transaction of worldly affairs. The advantages of a Christian life, the living of which shall add a hundred-fold to this world's goods and secure life everlasting, may justifiably be brought to public attention in materially beneficial ways in addition to the pastor's work and the Sunday sermon.

The approach to a religious life has changed. Formerly the impelling force was preparation for the hereafter (considering that some might prefer another sort of life, were it not for the hereafter). Although placing more importance upon the conduct of matters affecting earthly life, modern thought recognizes that the Christian spirit interwoven with worldly affairs is the most potent of all factors in the elevation of mankind, regardless of any belief in a hereafter.

A successful evangelistic revival of street preaching by a group of fifty theological students and college graduates, brought together under the name of the "Non-Sectarian Student Christian Mission," with the cooperation of the pastors, business people, and civic associations of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for a week during last summer, proved that the people of that industrial city were responsive to the call for individual consideration of the challenge of religion. The presentation of such religions as the home-training of the young has afforded, the introduction into college courses of instruction in the literature of the Bible, and the endeavor to have athletics conducted on a high level of sportsmanship by men of character who recognize that athletics are a vital element in educational institutions, go to show the

recognition of the need and the importance of the study of the spiritual life of man, and of religion, in the field of education.

The Doctrine of Life, the belief in the good life for the sake of the good, is undoubtedly the strongest attraction in bringing the ordinary man into the New-Church portals.

All Christian bodies believe in the mitigation of human ills, in moral uplift, and in the betterment of earthly existence. The process of influencing and securing the passage of laws for these purposes, and urging their enforcement, is well within the province of modern church action. The churches are looked to, to sustain and promote the religious thought and the moral tone of the community, and they accept this responsibility; but if as religious and moral leaders they are not to be allowed to express in advance their opinions of the effect of proposed legislation, they become so far handicapped in the work expected of them.

In this work there need be no sacrifice of the doctrines, confession of faith, or the beliefs of any sect or religious body. The Massachusetts Federation of Churches and the Federation of Churches of Greater Boston desire none of their supporters to relinquish or change in any respect their doctrinal tenets. Their hope is that they may continue to present an unbroken front in their effort for the general advancement of Christian action and the betterment of society, not by any constitutional amendment imperiling the structure of our government, but rather by local laws and regulations adapted to the existing conditions in the fields in which the work is carried on; thus allowing the Constitution to continue the bulwark of American liberty, the executive, the legislative, and the judicial bodies their allotted functions under a government which from its beginning has withstood the winds and waves of time, and has proved a blessing to its citizenship, and if allowed to continue to carry out the ideals of its founders will remain a guaranty of happiness for coming generations, and will keep open a highway for those seeking the establishment of the Lord's Church upon the earth.

WILLIAM WARREN TOWLE.

SACRED SCRIPTURE IN PARABLE FORM*

By Ednah C. Silver.

A PARABLE is a story within a story. The literal sense of the Scripture is half the Bible, and the inner symbolic meaning is the other half. It is described in Rev. v. 1 as a closely sealed book "written within and on the back." The outer, lower meaning is largely external, but is essential to shadow forth or typify things higher up, which, as the apostle Paul says, must be "spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians ii. 14). The symbol points upward to the thing symbolized, which is always on a distinctly higher level. For example: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks" (bodily thirst on the physical plane), "so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (distinctly spiritual thirst of man's higher nature). Again, in Matthew xxiii. 23, "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin" (visible material offerings), "and have omitted judgment, mercy and faith" (invisible offerings of the spirit). The letter is often a cloud obscuring the true meaning within. In Isaiah liv. 8, we read "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment" (a cloud about ready to break), "but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee" (inner light bursting forth in radiance). These three verses are miniature parables, furnishing both meanings. Portions of Scripture are clear, simple, beautiful, as they stand; but often they are a mirror of human nature with its manifold faults and its distorted views of God. Detach the literal sense completely from an inner sense, as the "Higher Critics" seem inclined to do, and we concede that its science and history cannot be logically defended. But we will bring

*A series of talks from brief notes, given on request to a group of fifty-eight ladies of various faiths, and subsequently written out. They were followed by a concluding talk on Swedenborg and his part in making known the symbolic meaning of Scripture.

the whole Bible, not half of it, to the test. The book of Nature furnishes a vast store of types or images from which the Bible draws material. It is God's only way of speaking to us through the written Word. It has been largely lost; but bits of it occur in myth and fable, and it hovers unconsciously on our very lips. Let us begin on the lowest plane of Nature.

(I) *The Mineral Kingdom.*—When we wish to praise a certain fine type of character, we instinctively select the most precious of all metals for a symbol. We say, He is as good as gold. We never blunder, never say, He is as good as brass, or copper, or tin, or lead, or zinc, or pewter. The banker defines his first-class securities by calling them "gilt-edge." Travel with gold coin, whether American eagle, British sovereign, or French multiple franc, it is pre-eminent as a medium of exchange. The Golden Rule is a standard for ideal dealings between men. The Golden Age is a period of ideal general relationships.

What are the characteristics of fine, pure gold? It vastly excels in malleability. One ounce of the thin leaf will cover three hundred square feet. This suggests that good uses should extend to the farthest limit. It has also the adaptability of goodness in yielding to an irregular surface. The doors of fir in Solomon's Temple with carved designs of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers were overlaid with gold fitted upon the graven work (I Kings vi. 34, 35).

Ductility is another dominant trait of gold. One grain can be drawn into a wire five hundred feet in length (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. xii, p. 193, 202). Does the Bible refer to gold thread or wire? Psalm xlv. 13, 14, describes the King's Daughter (the ideal Church) as "all glorious within" (noble in motive). "Her clothing is of wrought gold"; her outward deportment is interpenetrated with goodness, in and out, through and through, over and under —no superficial appliqué work on the surface. The Bible describes angels as girded with golden girdles, and clothed with pure and white linen; and the latter is elsewhere de-

fined as the righteousness of saints (Revelation xv. 6; xix. 8). After malleability and ductility comes freedom from rust. "Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where rust doth not corrupt" (Matthew vi. 20). Goodness does not corrode. The color of gold cheers and brightens; it is like sunshine or flame. In the Temple of Scripture the ten-branched lampstand was of gold (II Chronicles iv. 7). Gold is sometimes spoken of in a perverted sense, both in common speech and in Scripture. We refer to gilded youths as those who are rich and useless. In Dante's "Inferno" hypocritics were doomed to wear iron cloaks, gilded and fair without, but frightfully heavy beneath. The calves of gold for idolatrous worship set up in Samaria by the spurious king Jereboam were a part of the evil devices of his own heart (I Kings xii. 28, 33).

Iron, although hard and apparently unyielding, can, on application of heat, be melted and molded to fit any circumstance, after which it becomes firm. Likewise, truth in the civil law can be fashioned to fit the times. When conditions alter, the law can be greatly modified after the manner of recasting metal. The primitive plowshare, small, sharp and simple, need not be sent to the scrapheap, but can be subjected to remolding.

Rock is unbending. Government by the consent of the governed is the corner-stone of a republic; it cannot be seriously altered without danger to the structure above. The foundation of an unlimited monarchy is often the capricious will of a despot. It is a false rock, and is not enduring, as history testifies. We read in Revelation iii. 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." And as a stone column supports the roof of a religious edifice, in like manner we describe a strong and abiding member of our society as a sustaining power and pillar of the Church.

Weights and measures are given double meaning in our Bible and in our current speech. We speak of a wise man's words as having great weight, of a burden of responsi-

bility, of a heart heavy with sorrow; but none of them can be estimated in a merchant's scale. The prophet Micah (vi. 11) gives a sharp moral rebuke when he says, "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances and with the bag of deceitful weights?" And Deuteronomy sharply enjoins: "Not divers weights, great and small, but a perfect and just weight." The prophet Daniel (in chapter v, especially verse 27) gives with great dramatic force the value of weight. The Babylonian king Belshazzar has lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven. He gives a great feast to a thousand of his lords together with his wives and concubines. It is an impious feast, using for Bacchanalian revelries the holy golden vessels from Solomon's Temple which Nebuchadnezzar had stolen as war loot. It is a base betrayal as a feast; the king is frivolously indifferent to his country's welfare, when the enemy is secretly undermining the city. That very night Babylon will fall. The mysterious hand appears; the ominous words are written; the king's knees smite one against the other. The prophet Daniel interprets the word *Tekel*: "Thou are weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Wanting in what? Shall we be literalists, and say pounds avoirdupois? The question is too empty to need reply. Is the king wanting in intelligence, scholarship, reasoning powers or erudition? Why is this question futile and weak? Because it appertains only to the mind. Truly, as a man thinketh in his *heart,* so is he. Thus runs the proverb. Here is the solution: There is vacancy of righteousness in Belshazzar's soul.

Measures with their two levels of meaning are just as significant as weights. We say of George Washington that his monument is high, but it feebly expresses the loftiness of his purpose. We describe Mr. A as laying deep foundations for his house, and as laying still deeper plans for political preferment. We describe Mr. B as the possessor of broad acres, and an extraordinarily broad intellect. Mr. C's office is so contracted that he can hardly turn around in it, and his mind is so narrow that he cannot turn around in

it at all to see the other side of a question. The prophet Isaiah (xxviii. 17) says with characteristic incisiveness: "Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet."

What is the highest object in the inorganic kingdom? The sun, which far outstrips planets, satellites, luminous belts, and meteors. It is a force, a possible motor power. The Psalmist declares God a sun, and that power belongeth unto Him. Electricity baffles the scientist. He does not create it through the dynamo. He brings the mysterious thing from nobody knows where, into an activity perceptible to our senses. Suppose we accept the definition of Professor Joseph Le Conte: "All the forces of nature are various manifestations of the Divine Energy." Our earthly sun has healing powers; hence our sun-parlors for therapeutic purposes. And Malachi (iv. 2) promises that the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His Wings. Our solar orb quickens the sleeping sap to arise and climb; and the Psalmist (lxxi. 20) says: "O God, Thou shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." Flood the garden with cold moonlight, plants will not germinate; they need solar warmth. And the Psalmist's prayer responds (cxix. 159): "Quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy loving kindness."

Our solar system is a pleasant object lesson. The earth would be drawn into the sun and perish if the centripetal power were the only one; but a counter force draws it away. Overload the latter, and the planet would fly off at a tangent and be lost in space, but it preserves a perfect balance. Our sun typifies the Lord; we are the planets. His love draws us toward Him; and we should be merged in Him and lose our identity, were we not endowed with freedom of will, furnishing a basis of reaction. We may abuse our liberty; as the Prodigal Son went off at a tangent and was deplorably lost for a while, but he came freely back, and obediently resumed his well-ordered orbit path.

The north and south poles of our planet are unproduc-

tive, in their semi-darkness and low temperature, because of their oblique position toward the sun. We also can assume a non-receptive, indifferent attitude toward the Lord, and lose most of His blessings. A portion of the earth is in darkness every night. Spiritually this is a wise provision. We need cessation from work, and we need oblivion. The knotty problems will not work out in the evening; but after a refreshing sleep, not only is the physical brain rested, lo! the problems solve themselves. The subconscious mind has done its ripening work during the night, and has cleared away our difficulties. To ensure refreshing sleep, read just previously some tranquilizing Scripture verses.

(II) *The Vegetable Kingdom.*—We now step up into a region of organisms, where plant life develops from within outward. Let us visit a meadow carpeted with blossoms, west of the Sea of Galilee, in March, 1902. Here is an area blue with lupins only, another region yellow with genista, a third, purple with cyclamen; other spaces are glowing with scarlet, or snowy with white anemones, or are a veritable mosaic of all intermingled in most decorative fashion. Study their exquisitely delicate texture through a microscope. Recall the Hebrew king on his sumptuous throne of ivory and gold. Turn your lenses on the royal purple velvet robe of that day woven by man; observe its unfinished aspect, and be assured that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these field blossoms (Luke xii. 27). Other Bible passages occur, as we taste the bitter herb of the Passover, typifying the bitterness of bondage (Exodus i. 8; xii. 8).

The inner sense of Scripture is of universal application; the letter was immediately addressed to a small area, the then known world being limited. Bible readers in remote times were not bewildered by mention of unknown trees; and in Bible parable they recognized the practical qualities of well-known home growths. The flora of the Bible is almost wholly Palestinian and of wide range. Sheltered

slopes produce the semi-tropical fig, orange and date palm. Go a bit north and we find the cedar, cypress and other cone-bearers. Some are familiar to us, so that at Christmas we can respond to the Divine suggestion that the glory of Lebanon may come to our churches, "the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box-tree together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary" (Isaiah lx. 13).

In a fitful way we recognize in our daily speech that tree-growth is analogous to character-growth. The place where young trees are grouped we call a nursery; and the place where young children are gathered we also call a nursery. The visible part of a tree is in the air, as our thoughts live in a mental atmosphere. There is a long foliage period when the tree is working largely for itself, gathering substance, and storing up strength—a pleasant harbinger of better things. This leafage period is that of the kindergarten, primary, grammar, high school, college and post-graduate work. It is pleasant to see our boys and girls gathering knowledge, storing up strength, and having their faculties drawn out. Leaves feed on inorganic substances, as young minds gather general knowledge for mental discipline and wide culture. But this is not the end for which fruit trees and children were created; young people often recognize it as preparatory, and long to get out into the world and do something.

The Bible parable of the trees in Judges, chapter ix, presents character study. This is the historical situation. Gideon, surnamed Jerubbaal, a mighty man of valor, strenuously opposed the foes of Israel. He refused the proffered crown, declaring, "God shall rule over you." At his death, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, claimed kingship, and was aided by his mother's idolatrous family. Robbing the shrine of the false god Baal, he hired light and vain persons who slew his half-brothers, the true sons of Gideon. Only Jotham, the youngest son, escaped; and he courageously proclaimed on Mt. Gerizim his parable; how the trees went out to choose a king; how the olive tree, the fig, and

the vine refused to adopt low standards, and compromise their own high qualities by which they honored God and man; how the trees foolishly chose the bramble (Abimelech) bristling with hostile thorns, and arbitrarily demanding unqualified trust in him. What human qualities do these trees typify?

Evidently, the olive ranks highest, indicative of interior beauty. It is modest, not self-assertive. Its twigs are graceful and pliable, not stiff and unyielding. When the inner trunk decays and is not serviceable, the tree throws its vitality into living useful growth. We pass by the attractive silver-lined leaves, and observe the flowers, small and white in their profuse abundance. They are delicate, fragrant, finer-grained than the leaves, expressing a higher desire to do good, a promise.

At last comes the fruit, the crowning purpose. Oil from the olive berries is highly nutritive, and it gives a soft, warm radiance as emitted from the golden branched candlestick in the Hebrew Tabernacle and Temple. Observe in 1902 the primitive method of lighting the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople. Long rods suspended from the ceiling hold horizontal circular frameworks of iron (like a spoked wheel). On these frameworks rest eight thousand shallow iron saucers, each holding a lighted floating wick. The foolish virgins in the parable carried cold, empty lamps of truth unproductive of good (Matthew xxv. 3). The light of a loving religion helps us over the hard places, and cheers and heartens our neighbors.

Oil applied to wounds has healing power. Used by the Good Samaritan it symbolized his love for a neighbor in distress (Luke x. 34). Oil lessens friction in machinery, as little courtesies and amenities soften relationships between persons. If, in collecting a debt by letter, we issue a peremptory "Stand and deliver!" we throw sand into the complex machinery of business; but we oil it when we say, "Kindly remit at your earliest convenience." When President Harding retains Admiral Grayson in Washington be-

cause he is physician to the invalid ex-President Wilson, we see one political party holding out the olive branch to another. Our country holds out an international olive branch to China, when we devote to their students a part of our Boxer indemnity money.

Our early judgments of persons are apt to be somewhat sharp and stringent, like the unripe olive berry. An affirmative and conciliatory attitude toward others does not become habitual until late in life. And it is significant that the olive tree is of slow growth, beginning to bear at about twelve years of age, and not attaining maturity until forty. Observe that the olive tree signifies that which nourishes, heals, soothes, cheers, and sanctifies. In Psalm xlv. 7, the redeemed Church is thus prophetically addressed: "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness."

The grapevines rank lower than the olive in Jotham's parable. They cling for support, but not like parasitic people who fasten themselves on others that they may draw out and enrich their own selfish selves. The friendly outreaching grape tendrils show a sympathetic quality, a strong social desire for friendly relationship with other people. They love the sunshine; and when they are lifted up by trellis or pole, they generously reward us all by their little closed cups of juice. The water drawn up from the earth gathers elements from air and sunshine, and is transmuted by God's chemistry into a nutritious liquid. By a correspondingly similar process the literal truth or water of life in the Decalogue becomes wine for the soul in the Ten Blessings. The command, "Thou shalt not kill," is lifted up, and reads, "Blessed are the merciful." The injunction, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," ascends from the lower deterrent plane of the Law to the higher affirmative plane of the Gospel, and we read, "Blessed are the peace-makers." The great number of grapes in a cluster suggests our manifold little duties to our neighbor; the olive berry, single or in small groups, suggests that love to the Lord comes before love to the neighbor. As the wise gardener cuts back super-

fluous grape twigs, so we need much disciplinary pruning. We must constantly cut off secondary activities which tend to over-multiply. Jehovah rebuked His Church for bringing forth wild grapes, essentially sour. He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry (Isaiah x. 1-7).

The fig tree of parable is by no means lofty, but broad and low. The extreme type, the Pagoda fig of India, casts a vertical shadow several hundred feet in diameter. The branches reach down to the ground and take root, creating a small forest from one central trunk; it is certainly of the earth, earthy. Unlike the visible olive blossoms, which generously share their beauty for our pleasure, the fig blossoms are concealed within the flower stalk, the latter gradually expanding into a fig. The fruit grows in the dark, and signifies an obscure knowledge of what is right, although its mission is to perform useful deeds. It is like the benevolence of children and simple-minded people, who give indiscriminately without much intelligent care. Our Family Welfare Societies warn us to study conditions. The unproductive fig tree in Matthew xxi. 19 withered away under Divine condemnation. We sometimes devise a useful plan, and continually postpone its beginning. The more we talk the worse; all our vitality is exhausted in words, words, words.

We read in Luke xix. 1-10 of Zaccheus, who climbs a tree that he may see Jesus pass by. He is vacillating and contradictory, gives half his goods to the poor, and further declares, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." This looks like alternately doing wrong, and then undoing it. He is unfaithful to Rome; does he make restitution with his own money? He might recall what John the Baptist said to the publicans, "Exact no more than has been appointed you" (Luke iii. 12, 13). Space forbids following Zaccheus into better ways of living. We will leave him in the sycamore tree, which is an inferior kind of fig.

We now return directly to the Scriptural parable of the trees (Judges ix.). It is plain that the light, vain, unscrupulous followers of Abimelech will not conform to the standard of the three good trees—the celestial love of the olive, the spiritual intelligence of the vine, or the lowly good works of the fig. They prefer to be governed by the bramble. The prophet Zephaniah (ii. 9) describes a perpetual desolation through the breeding of nettles; and we speak of a sharply annoying person as a thorn in our side. Abimelech was the Bramble King. They must come arbitrarily under his shadow, or he would breathe out fire and destroy them. He was inexpressibly cruel and vindictive; and is one of the evil men described by Micah vii. 3, 4: "They are as a brier, and sharper than a thorn hedge, that they may do evil with both hands earnestly." Let us close with a pleasant word for thorns. They may be free from malice and exist only for defence. The thorns on a rose bush remind us that popular people must ward off intrusion a bit, or they would have no leisure for useful work.

(III) *The Animal Kingdom.*—Animals are on the whole a higher type of organism than plants, are nearly related to our emotional life, and are a vivid expression of human characteristics. A tree is rooted to one spot, and has its limitations. It is difficult of transportation. It reminds us of a definite system of knowledge which has established itself in the mind of a mayor, who has long been ruler over a city. His system is founded on fact and experience. It is more to him than a theory; it is a working hypothesis, even an established law. It will not work elsewhere under different conditions. James Bryce knew English cities well; he had a detached and impartial point of view in studying us; he had a penetrative discrimination, but he knew his limitations; and he secured Seth Low, then mayor of New York, to write over his own name the chapter on Municipal Government in Bryce's book "The American Commonwealth." Animals are more sensitive than trees, and more

adaptable to foreign conditions. A warm heart will fit in anywhere; but the mind is comparatively unbending.

Reptiles are the lowest order of animal in our zoological classification. The dragon in Scripture is a scaly creature with a mythical name reminding us of the crocodile, which loves to stir up the mud, and does not care to live in clear water. The prophet Ezekiel (xxix. 3) uses the dragon as a type to describe Pharaoh, whose vision is certainly murky and distorted when he claims, "The river is mine own and I made it." In response, Jehovah replies, "Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great dragon." The serpent is another reptile which figures in the Bible. It lies prone on the ground, and is certainly of the earth, earthy. Its only motion is horizontal, gliding, sinuous, deceptive. If caught by the tail and held, it is helpless, having no leverage. It represents an undue love of sensuous pleasures. In Exodus iv. 1-4 we have a parable-story rich in meaning. The Lord said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" On receiving the reply, "A rod," the Lord bade him cast it on the ground, when it became a serpent. Consider the serpent as a type of the bodily appetite. Out from under control it leads to inebriety, all the way to delirium tremens,—to be fled from in horror. But caught by the tail or lowest point, and under effective control, a well-regulated appetite becomes a rod or staff or support to health. Without it we are alarmingly anemic. The Book of Genesis depicts the serpent as a tempter. And Shakespeare calls the temptress Cleopatra, "that Old Serpent of the Nile." The Gospel commands the disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew x. 16); and our five senses rightly used can exercise circumspection and prudence, warning us of danger, as the nostrils detect escaping gas or malarial odor.

Fishes rank distinctly above reptiles. Observe a small fish, a complex creature of bones and springs, with paddles and a rudder attached. It is a little scientific wonder in

self-navigation. Go to the Chicago Centennial Exposition in 1893, and compare the swift darting and rapid curves of a fish with that of the most skilful Eskimo canoeist. Fish live and breathe in the water, as students of physical science live in the region of natural truth—that which appeals to the senses. Jesus of Nazareth drew several Galilean fishermen away from their nets. When he made them fishers of men, they gathered men into the Christian Church by spiritual nets, which were vastly higher than those of knotted twine used in their early vocation.

Birds rank higher than fishes, as air is a higher medium than water in which to live and breathe. Birds of night are bad birds, and are depicted in Scripture as owls and doleful creatures inhabiting the ruined city of Babylon (Isaiah xiii. 19-21). They are types of those men who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Honest men work in the light; but counterfeiters work with darkened windows, locked doors, muffled sounds, and pickets outside. Our song birds represent a love of right thinking. They hop about from limb to limb, here and there, like our thoughts. Their habitual life here is one of short flights, singing as they go, like our conversation in social life; not a profound, sustained, prolonged pursuit of truth, but a flitting exchange of sentiments. Psalm lxxxiv. 1-4 suggests to us the homesick Jewish captives in Babylon, whose thoughts fly back with yearning to the beloved Temple in Jerusalem. There is a pathetic envy of the song birds which can find a nest and home for their young in some niche of the altar of God.

Mammals are the highest order of animal life, distinguished by the prolonged period of motherhood, which is greatly accentuated when we observe human beings. The fish lay their eggs, and swim away never to return; but the maternal solicitude grows more sympathetic as we ascend. Sheep are good symbols of worthy human qualities. They do not labor for us, like the muscular ox, patient in en-

deavor. We love the sheep for what they are. Their clothing—extra wool just for us—is fine in texture, soft, long, fibrous, excellent for matting or felting into compact form. This outward expression is like manners which are continuous and kindly, not capricious, abrupt, or inconstant. The sheep give us all that they have, wool for clothing, skin for leather, meat for food, even to the nutritious marrow of their bones. The shepherd sometimes takes the little lambs in his arms, that the timid and defenceless mother sheep may follow him up the heights over dangerous ways. The Divine Shepherd calls the little ones from our home to Him for similar reasons; do we always give up the treasures wholeheartedly? In Palestine the relation between the shepherd and his woolly charges is like warm-hearted home life. In the United States our sheep are in great fenced tracts; they can be watered mechanically, overlooked by flying machines, and reported by radio. The Bible Land flocks are small, and they answer to their names at the shepherd's call (we have heard it in Arabic); they are personally led away from the precipitous crag or the fierce wolf; they love their protector even more than they love each other. Their care-taker is a type, pointing upward to the Divine Shepherd, the Lord God, whom Ezekiel describes in xxxiv. 12, 16: He will seek us out where "we have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day"; he will "bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick." Sheep are ingenuous, like little children whose character we can read in their faces. We lose much of that quality when we grow up; we are not transparent, having something to conceal; we may even grow artificial and disingenuous. The guilelessness of the child is the innocence of ignorance, not knowing the wily ways of the world. In later years we can attain the innocence of wisdom. The more we harbor good will in our hearts, and love other people, the less we have to conceal. There was once a venerable Chief Justice, alert mentally, ingenuous, playful,

simplehearted, in the world but not of it; the more noticeable because judges and lawyers come professionally into contact with what is subtle, sophisticated and insincere.

Wolves are the antipodes of the sheep. They are lone and solitary, only banding together when they are temporarily united in evil to destroy; sheep feed close together, and are permanently united in good fellowship. Wolves detect the odor of carnage afar off; sheep love the fragrant clover. Wolves penuriously contribute to man little except their skin; sheep unselfishly give their all. The wolves' bite is short and snappy; sheep are confiding, defenceless, unwarlike, suggesting the love of peace. The Bible warns us against hypocrites, outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly ravening wolves, devising wily ways to entangle and destroy. Wolves are rapacious in devouring their prey; hypocrites are rapacious in devouring widows' houses (Matthew vii. 15; xxiii. 14).

Herod, the tetrarch, is called in the Bible a fox (Luke xiii. 32); he was crafty and cruel. Not only Scripture but our daily speech often employs animals as symbols of human character. Forty years ago the political organization in New York City called Tammany acquired the significant name of Tammany the Tiger.

By contrast, let us turn completely away to the twenty-third Psalm, beginning "The Lord is my Shepherd." We are sitting by the bedside of a beloved member of our own household in her last sickness. We read to her, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Note the expression, "*shadow* of death." Perhaps death is not the terrible plunge into a black valley sometimes described. Perhaps the shadow is cast by our fears, and back of our fears is the sunshine of God's presence. We hold the dear one's hand, even to the very borderland of another world, and then we must relinquish it to Him, in tranquility and faith. The young form of clay in which she lived is still visible. On it is

sometimes imprinted a smile, a renewal of youth, a relaxing from pain, a last token to you left by her, an assurance that she, who lived in it as a spiritual being, is now free. She has fallen into her last little sleep; for does not the prophet Hosea, vi. 2, say, "After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." She is watched over by beautiful, resurrection angels, strengthened by the benediction of His presence. The temporary clay-wrapping is permanently discarded, and she carries with her everything that made her the affectionate, vividly alive, aspiring being that we loved here. David knew the Bethlehem shepherd's life, his protecting companionship, his alert vigilance, his individual care, for his sheep; and he drew on it to describe the watchfulness of the Divine Shepherd covering our life here, and the life hereafter in His house. And who was back of this sweet psalmist of Israel? He says on his dying bed, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue" (II Samuel xxiii. 2).

Ednah C. Silver.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

THE CALENDAR AND THE BOOK OF LIVE

The societies of the New Church in Greater Boston group their church notices in one of the city's newspapers. A year ago there stood at the head of this joint notice the sentence,

> By the book of life, spoken of in the Word, is meant that all things which a man has done and thought are inscribed on his whole being, and appear as if read from a book when they are called forth from his memory after death. (Heaven and Hell, n. 463.)

The quotation was selected, of course, with a thought for the new year. If indeed we are writing down in our lives all we think and feel and do, by all means let us know it. Let us remind ourselves of the fact as we enter a new year. With the calendar let us take some note of this spiritual diary which each of us is composing.

Thought of a book of life—whatever this might be—is old. The quotation from "Heaven and Hell" may think of it in a new way, but the idea itself of a book of life goes back into Old Testament days at least. Moses is represented as praying to the Lord to forgive a sin of Israel's,

> Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. (Exodus xxxii. 32.)

And the Lord answers,

> Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. (Exodus xxxii. 33.)

The Psalmist, calling down destruction upon his enemies, prays,

> Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. (Psalm lxix. 28.)

The thought is of some supernatural register of the righteous. So it continues with the Old Testament people. The book is the list of those who are true members of the theocracy. And as Jewish expectation is fastened on a Messianic kingdom, it becomes the list of those who are members of that kingdom, here or hereafter.

> Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel xii. 1.)
>
> The judgment was set, and the books were opened. (*Ibid.*, vii. 10.)

The same figure of speech, so habitual in the mouth of the Jew, continued on the lips of those who became Christians. Indeed those, still in Old Testament days, who waited on the Christ, were said to have a book recording their hope and confidence. In Malachi's day

> [Those who] feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought on His name.
>
> And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My Jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. (Malachi iii. 16, 17.)

So the thought of a book of life reached to Christian days. In the New Testament, written almost wholly by Jewish Christians, the figure of speech persists. In that book of the New Testament most Jewish of all in mode of utterance, the Book of Revelation, the Risen Christ says to the Church in Sardis,

> I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Revelation iii. 5.)

Again, the Beast in the Apocalypse will be worshipped by all

> Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (*Ibid.*, xiii. 8; xvii. 8.)

As in Daniel the book of life also appears in connection with the judgment:

> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of

life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (*Ibid.*, xx. 12.)

Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (*Ibid.*, xx. 15.)

The kingdom has grown in Revelation to be the final kingdom of the Lord of all the world; but still the book of life is the register of the members of His kingdom.

The figure of speech is time-honored. The general idea is ancient. But the quotation with which we began, gives it a new and startlingly intimate meaning.

By the book of life, spoken of in the Word, is meant that all things which a man has done and thought are inscribed on his whole being, and appear as if read from a book when they are called forth from his memory after death. (Heaven and Hell, n. 463.)

We do not need to go up into heaven to find this book. It is very near to us, a record in the tissues of the spirit of the things we have contemplated, and the things we have done. The Scriptures leave that record mysterious. Some supernatural being, God Himself sometimes, has the writing of it. But now *we* seem to have the writing of it. It is the record which our way of life leaves on us. The aims which we set ourselves, our generosities, our meannesses, all our experiences get themselves done in an invisible script in the very stuff of life and in the tissues of the soul. That surely is an arresting thought! If it wins any conviction from us, it will incline us to take a much more sober account of the fleeting calendar, earthly device though that is.

Life is so disposed under God that it records itself—is this our book of life?

The relatively inert earth has recorded its life in itself; we have been startled to read the records off. Trees note down their growth; or life does, as exhibited in them. Why should not life have the same graphic power in us? Why should not our innermost souls have their records, their inner memory? Somewhere in his "Journal" Amiel writes,

I begin to realize that my memory is a great catacomb, and that

below my actual standing-ground there is layer after layer of historical ashes.

Is the life of the mind something like that of great trees of immemorial growth? Is the living layer of consciousness superimposed upon hundreds of dead layers? *Dead?* No doubt this is too much to say. . . .

Suppose these "dead layers" of consciousness are the books which are opened when the dead are judged? It seems absurd that all other life should record itself,—human achievement in monument and autobiography, the world of music in notation and instrument and mechanical record, the race's long progress up to the present in traces of earlier stages of growth,—it seems absurd that all other life should record itself, but that that soul and that will and that genius which are back of it all should not. Digging deep into the earth for the foundations of a building, workmen will come on peculiar ripples in the sand. Not for ages has there been water in that neighborhood. Yet water left those ripples there, and recorded its ancient presence. The wash of feeling over our souls leaves its marks. Why should greed write itself down in the flesh of the face, if it does not write itself down more fully and precisely in the more plastic stuff of the spirit? Or kindliness? Or any of the myriad feelings, purposes, moods and thoughts with which we identify ourselves in the least? So the disclosures of the other world in "Heaven and Hell" include disclosures of an "inner memory". The soul has its own memory. It far outgoes our recollection, in scope, in accuracy, in depth. What we may be able to recall may be very little, and none too exact. It will be like the little that is told, comparatively, about the kings of Judah and Israel: so much is told; as for the rest of the acts of Rehoboam or any other king, is this not written in records, named, but now long lost? Unless life wrote itself up so, should we have the Lord saying,

> Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment? (Matthew xii. 36.)

Or again,

> Take heed what ye hear? (Mark iv. 24.)

Or again, with a wide sweep of meaning,

> For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad? (Mark iv. 22.)

Assign any sort of substance and structure to the human spirit, and the life which moves in it and over it records itself deeply and exactly there, which manages to stamp the face with itself, or the manner, or the tone of voice, which are so much more remote from it. In Elbert Hubbard's interesting scrap-book there is a lone quotation from Swedenborg. It was this passage on the book of life which impressed him:

> When a man's deeds are discovered after death, his angels, who are inquisitors, look into his face, and extend their examination over his whole body, beginning with the fingers of each hand. I was surprised at this, and the reason was thus explained to me:
>
> Every volition and thought of man is inscribed on his brain; for volition and thought have their beginnings in the brain, thence they are conveyed to the bodily members, wherein they terminate. Whatever, therefore, is in the mind is in the brain, and from the brain in the body, according to the order of its parts. So a man writes his life in his physique, and so the angels discover his autobiography in his structure. (Heaven and Hell, n. 463.)

What a record that is! We begin to have a more urgent appreciation of the declaration in "Divine Providence":

> Affections, which belong to the will, are just changes and variations in the organic substance of the mind; thoughts, which are of the understanding, are changes and variations in the form of that substance; and memory is the permanent state of those changes. (N. 279.)

The design of this teaching can hardly be a new terrorism. Yet it does make for a new fear of the Lord. In a day when the Lord of life is more likely to be represented as soft than as stern, that may be a wholesome corrective. We need deterrents from evil; and religion has always furnished the strongest of inward deterrents. The inward constraints alone come anywhere near washing the whole life clean. After all, the teaching only elaborates, in the terms of a psychology, the point of the Lord's words:

For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. (Mark iv. 22.)

That the disclosures of "Heaven and Hell" press this point sharply, is undeniable. We have the Seer saying:

That the human being takes all his memory with him when he leaves the natural world, has been proved by many things which I have heard and seen. . . .

There were those who denied the crimes and enormities which they had committed in the world. Therefore, lest they should be believed innocent, all their deeds were discovered and recounted in order from their own memory, from their earliest days to the last.

There were some who had deceived others iniquitously, and stolen. Their deceits and thefts were enumerated, though many of them were hardly known to any but themselves in the world. They admitted them, too, for they were displayed in the light, along with every thought, intention, enjoyment and fear, which passed through their minds at the time. . . .

It is evident from these examples that a man carries all his memory into the other world with him; and that there is nothing, however concealed here, which is not made manifest hereafter, agreeably to the Lord's words: "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke xii. 2, 3).

This may seem no New Year's theme, altogether. Yet in a world which is disordered with moral evil, the conscience must welcome the most stringent deterrent from evil. Could one have such a discovery of the depths of evil as "Heaven and Hell" makes, without the launching, to balance that discovery, of a powerful constraint on wrong-doing? There is the passing of traditional constraints which rested on a materialistic conception of the infernal world, to offset. And this new deterrent, modern psychology has been stamping with reality and inevitableness. How grateful we can be that the new deterrent is in religion's hands, however, to administer! Never, we can be sure then, is self-judgment revengefully pressed, or maliciously forced. God takes no pleasure in the moral death of any soul. Of a black page in his book of life a man may

feel encouraged to say, that that page is turned. "Never has life written me down another page as black as that. I know it is there; I also know that it does not record the present 'me'; I feel confident that the Lord Himself will not ask me, to no good end, to look on it."

If the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

All his transgressions which he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done shall he live. (Ezekiel xviii. 21, 22.)

For another reason we can be grateful that this new conception of the book of life is left to nothing less than religion to minister to us. Religion at once puts along with it power over moral evil. Could we contemplate the steady, exact record of all our life in the very structure of our being, save with the Lord of life beside us? "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared" (Psalm cxxx. 4). We have Him Who can hold our soul in life. He can keep it from all that we would not like to see set down in the book of our life. Only He can. Whatever it is that would write a black and ominous page in that book, He can stay the pen. He can even be given the writing of the book. There shall then in no wise enter into it, any more than into the Holy City, anything that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie; but only such things as can by any possibility be written in the Lamb's book of life.

Wm. F. Wunsch.

THE MODERN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BIBLE

Anyone who has the opportunity to feel the spirit of the age must be profoundly impressed by the diverse currents of our modern life. No doubt we should look for the best, and hold on to our faith in the essential goodness of men and of human nature; we should have absolute confidence in the final victory of the Spirit of Love. We have the doctrine that God,

the Lord, is Divine Love and Wisdom, and that these have all Power to direct the universe and to guide the life of men. These are solid grounds for hope and trust.

Nevertheless we cannot safely, or even faithfully, ignore the lessons of history. We must face fairly and squarely the actual present situation of the world, and ask earnestly and firmly what is the present day drift? We may undertake to read the signs of the times under the presupposition that the world is moving towards the better. We may look affirmatively for the evidences of improvement, development, evolution, progress,—it makes little difference what terms we use provided we hold our attention to the concrete situation. We believe—and there is a wide profession of the belief—that this is a new age. In New-Church circles this belief is grounded on the predictions in the Bible of the Lord's Second Coming, and on Swedenborg's teaching that the Second Coming has been accomplished in the opening of the spiritual meaning of the Bible to the rational and regenerating life of men. This belief is no doubt a powerful stimulus and support to confidence in the good, general drift of the age, and even a channel for the accomplishment of the Lord's new presence and operation. In other words, we may harbor no doubt that this is really the time of the Lord's Second Coming; but still we may question the stage, the degree, or the precise present mode of His Coming. In particular we may find reason for holding that for the moment His Coming is mainly in the body of doctrine given in Swedenborg's writings leading to the spiritual sense of His Word. And further, we may find reason for holding that in a secondary sense His Coming is in the body of thought and life of the group, the organization, which acknowledges, and is faithful to, the doctrine, and the spiritual meaning of the Bible to which it leads. This is our appointed means of coming into the Lord's new presence; for it is a part, and the essential part, of the doctrine that the Lord is the Word viewed interiorly.

All this we may, and should, hold to firmly. But when we come to the concrete facts of the world situation, and try to

observe the evidences of the new age, the distinctive evidences of the Second Coming, we face a very complicated, and difficult, situation. Some of the moral and intellectual, and perhaps some of the spiritual, characters of the age are apparently hopeful and progressive; some are apparently not. It is largely a matter of point of view, prejudice, or presupposition, whether we select the one or the other. It is well to admit at the outset that no one man's point of view, nor the point of view of any one group of men, is broad enough and deep enough to observe correctly and report truthfully. But this does not relieve us of our individual responsibility, nor of our group responsibility. What is needed is to observe and to report to the best of our ability and opportunities.

Avoiding the question whether or not the morality of our age is on a higher level than that of previous ages,—that is, whether conduct is made to conform closer or not to moral principles and decisions,—it is reasonably certain that our intellectual outlook in the moral, mental, and presumably the spiritual realms, is wider and deeper than previously. This is in the main, perhaps entirely, due to the march of science and of scientific method. The scientific progress is not merely characteristic of our age, but it is an immense and an indispensable aid to moral and spiritual attainment. Whether or not our vastly increased knowledge is actually used for good, is an embarrassing question; for knowledge lends itself to evil as well as to good purposes. Looking to the field of the conveniences of life and humanitarian endeavor, the extraordinary progress is obvious. Science has done and is doing wonders to conquer disease and poverty; but at the same time, in its applications, it is multiplying the conditions for both. Our industrial system which science is perfecting is grinding humanity to the dust, and making poverty, disease, and crime more or less inevitable. It is very easy, and very tempting, to laud modern life; but when we compare it intellectually, physically, socially, and artistically with the golden age of Greece, we get a sobering sense of hesitation and doubt. We seem to be rejoicing for the moment on the top wave of modernism.

But a glance at history shows that modernism is not peculiar to this age. The first modernist, or at least the pre-eminent early modernist, was Xenophanes, the old Greek philosopher; and it would be a wholesome lesson if some of the dispensers of modernistic gossip today would take the trouble to acquaint themselves directly with the views of Xenophanes. Martin Luther was another eminent modernist; but in the light of history we would hardly follow his example in every detail. The truth is, modernism is a transient phase, if not a disease, in the currents of human opinion. As such we may treat it indulgently, but at the same time critically. At least, we cannot say with clear conscience and full understanding, that the modern world, and still less modernism, is altogether hopeful and good. We may reasonably entertain the suspicion that the immediate and present trend of the world is on the whole in the direction of the bad; then we may assume the airs of omniscience, and say that the present bad is leading to future good. Even so, this does not justify us in yielding to the present bad as a means to future good. The only thing for us to do, is to put away the evil and the bad, and trust only to the good.

When, in view of these considerations, we ask, what is the modern attitude towards the Bible, we are asking a question of critical and fundamental importance. It is true, of course, that religion is based upon the fact of God's existence; but in the Christian world the Bible makes His existence and character known to us. Our attitude towards the Bible, therefore, is an element of primary importance in our religious life and thought. We live spiritually in and from the Bible. Try to imagine the state of mind of present or future men, if it were possible to blot out the memory of the Bible absolutely. If all direct or indirect knowledge of the Bible were blotted out, the mind of Christendom would be hopelessly lost, or reduced below the spiritual level of savagery. The modern attitude towards the Bible is a vital and practical question, for the very reason that it is a real, and not merely a rhetorical, question.

The question is too complicated to admit of a precise answer.

The answer given by any one observer or enquirer must have all the defects of narrow observation and imperfect knowledge. Nevertheless, there are certain broad features of the situation which will enable us to approximate an answer of real significance.

First of all, it seems obvious that the modern attitude towards the Bible is one of indifference. This presumably could be demonstrated by a show of hands; as recently, at a religious center, in a group of young men representing the theological schools and the religious associations of the community, it was shown that but five out of three hundred had read the Bible that day. If this is the case in groups specially or professionally interested in religion, what should we expect in the great world at large, in the factory towns and apartment houses, in the slums, in fashionable circles, in the great body of farmers and laborers? Perhaps not one in a thousand—or in fifty thousand. In fact, the habit of regular Bible reading and family prayers seems to be generally discontinued. If this is true, it is unquestionable evidence of indifference.

On the other hand, we are told that the demand for Bibles is increasing. It is estimated that 30,000,000 copies of the Bible are produced every year. Since the first Bible was printed by Gutenberg (in 1450), 600,000,000 copies have been produced. Either as a whole or in part, the Bible is published in 770 different languages and dialects. This is no doubt a significant aspect of the modern attitude. But this is the attitude of the missionaries, the publication agencies, the Church organizations, and the buyers. It does not reveal specifically the attitude of the Bible readers. The indifference and disuse which seem to be characteristic of the modern attitude towards the Bible, although a fact, may nevertheless be considered as really a stage of progress. Further investigation and a world-wide view might show that, in spite of the conditions nearest to us, more Bibles are sold and more Bibles are read now than ever before in the history of the Church or the world. Granting this, we may still ask whether the modern attitude is an improvement upon that of previous generations. In other

words, do modern readers approach the Bible with the same reverence and confidence, do they get the same spiritual satisfaction and help, the same light and guidance, as was common with our forefathers? Whatever the answer we give to these questions, it is certain that we face a most serious and complicated situation. Modern conditions are unfavorable in many respects for the quiet, meditative, enjoyment of Bible reading which some of us still remember. The exactions, the tension, and the hurry of business, and especially of city life, absorb our interest, and exhaust our energies. The various forms of amusement and recreation, the flood of newspapers, periodicals, and books, divert our minds, and leave us scant time for private devotions or deeper thinking. The mechanical age calls for multitudinous activities, and claims unremitting attention; but it leaves the mind and the spirit unstirred. The struggle for life and for livelihood is fiercely intense and beset with uncertainties and failure. On the whole, in spite of vast opportunities and unparalleled educational advantages, men are torn and distracted by the problems of life and thought. If under the burden of these conditions we could go to the Bible for spiritual refreshment, and for moral and intellectual strength and security, the case would be different, the prospect would be brighter, the situation would have its rich compensations.

But access to the Bible has become otherwise difficult; it has to some readers become enormously complicated, and to most perhaps unduly complicated. This is partly due to the complexities of modern times. The world is immensely more complicated both for thought and for conduct than it was a few generations back. The recent development of the special sciences has put a new face on the world. Mathematics, physics, biology, psychology, the social sciences, have so enlarged the field of knowledge that even the common mind has expanded to meet its requirements. The result is that now few people come to the Bible with the old-time simplicity and directness. There are echoes of modern science and philosophy, echoes of the findings of historical investigations and of the natural his-

tory methods. The outcome of these investigations and of this method in the field of Biblical scholarship has given us a strangely new Bible. Textual and literary criticism takes the Bible to pieces, re-arranges the parts, assigns them to different periods of history, and to different authors or sources; then it takes the separate books, dissects them minutely, breaks up the contents, re-arranges and re-assigns the sections according to the obvious or supposed historical requirements. This re-arranged and re-constituted text of the Bible may be historically correct, or it may not; it is certain that the Bible is re-shaped, if not defaced. The reader finds many strange dislocations which call for explanation and raise questions. He is puzzled; he becomes critical, and then sceptical. The authority of the Bible disappears, and the authority of the "Higher Critics," whether they agree or disagree, takes its place. Now all this unquestionably makes access to the Bible more complicated and difficult. Our repose and confidence are likely to be jarred any moment by disturbing questions; and the Bible so far ceases to be an object of reverence, and becomes rather an object of scientific curiosity. We may, of course, suppose that when the results of historical studies are generally known and accepted, the Bible will again invite the same direct and simple approach as formerly. It may be said, and truly said, that the Bible is what it is quite apart from our views and interpretations, and that patient trust in it as the Word of God will carry us through all these questions and difficulties. Trust in the Bible as the Word of God is essential in any case; but this plea involves the correctness of the modern attitude; and the modern attitude—perhaps we should say the modernistic attitude—is characterized by the acceptance of the reconstructed Bible.

This raises a further question and a still more vital one,—the question of the validity and sufficiency of the historical method as applied not merely to the text and composition of the Bible, but to its interpretation.

The Bible has, of course, a natural history. It was written by men, and its text was preserved and transmitted by men.

To ascertain the facts about the men, the time of the writing, the preservation and transmission, is an entirely proper and worthy pursuit. The method of doing this should be as strictly historical as the method of determining the authorship, the correct text, and the transmission of the Homeric poems. There is no valid objection to applying the historical method to the study of the natural history of the Bible; on the contrary, there is every reason why the method should be applied in all strictness, and that the well established results should be accepted. We cannot tolerate the principle of "the Twofold Truth"; that things may be true for science, but not for theology, and *vice versa*. But the truly scientific attitude should be broad enough to take the Bible in the light of its own claim. "The Word of the Lord came unto me saying" is the repeated assertion of the claim; and this cannot be scientifically ignored. Whatever may have been the contents of the mind of Moses, and whatever may have been the historical situation at the time of the writing, this repeated assertion declares that he is writing the Word of the Lord, and not merely his own thought. So of the other Bible writers,—the prophets, the Apostles, and the rest. When it is assumed that the whole meaning of the Bible is to be found in the meaning the writers had in mind and intended to express, then the Bible is given the character of mere natural history, and is by principle limited to the field of natural history. Under this assumption, the natural history method is not only proper but entirely sufficient. All we need ask then is, what did the writer intend. This we discover by learning what we can about the time in which he lived, his immediate environment, what the people around him thought, and what he himself must have thought. This is the historical method; and when applied under the presupposition that the whole meaning of the Bible is contained in what the writers intended, it may be properly characterized as the natural history method, for it limits the Bible to its natural history.

This principle meets an obstacle in the belief that the Bible is inspired; and also when the writer's thought conflicts with

what we call the natural order of the world, as in the case of miracles. The modern attitude for the most part surrenders the position of literal inerrancy. Nevertheless, the errors have to be accounted for, and also the low levels of moral character. This is attempted on the principle of evolution; in this view the Bible is a record of racial evolution—the character which gives it its special interest and significance. To overcome these obstacles, the attempt is made to distinguish between the language of the writer and the basic experiences which are or may be expressed by the language; and the forms of the language are taken as expressing the experiences, whether within the intent of the writer or not. This leads to a combination of literalism with a vague and arbitrary symbolism, which offers little or no promise of a helpful solution of the real problems and difficulties which the Bible presents to the modern mind.

The Bible has an extraordinary, not to say marvelous, history. Its text goes back into the far distant past, where there is no trace of history; it existed and was in use generations and centuries before the manuscript copies which we now have were made. The oldest copies we now possess are supposed to have been made in the ninth century, A.D. But aside from this textual history, the interpretation of the Bible has been a problem since the days of the Jewish Targum. The attempts of Philo, Origen, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, not to speak of such critics as Spinoza, Hume, Thomas Paine, and Robert Ingersoll, are more or less familiar. In modern books and commentaries we have very learned and labored attempts. But we are more interested in the actual reading of the Bible by the people in general. And here the first fact to be noted is, that the Bible has always been read as more or less, here and there, a book of symbols; the reader has looked behind and within the letter for the real meaning. In other words, the Bible has been read for its spiritual meaning; and the benefit derived has been largely a matter of feeling and appropriating this meaning. But the lack of a generally recognized and definite method of ascertaining the spiritual meaning, has been a real and constant difficulty, and has made the interpretation

of the Bible more or less guesswork. This lack is supplied by the doctrine of correspondence, which applies to the nature of language, to the constitution of the world, and especially to the interpretation of the Bible. When we use correspondences, a flood of light is thrown upon the Bible as a whole, and many difficulties are cleared up; but difficulties remain, and our new approach, our real work has only begun. Nevertheless we have mapped out the field, and we can work in a steady light that shines over the whole of it.

If we could say that this view is a part of the modern attitude towards the Bible, or if we could see that the modern attitude may lead to this view, the situation would be more hopeful. But the aspects above presented are very serious, if not adverse; they rest upon carefully laid foundations. A more enlightened naturalism, and a higher level of rationalism, are needed to turn the modern mind upward, and to fix it upon the full and clear spiritual light which is in the Bible, and which we may get from it.

Lewis F. Hite.

BIBLICAL AND DOCTRINAL STUDIES

LITTLE ONES DASHED TO PIECES

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. (Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9.)

These are not words of spiritual grace, certainly. They are a cry for vengeance, and for a most exact vengeance. The Babylonian soldiery has dashed out the brains of Hebrew infants. Let the same fearful fate befall *their* babes. And the Scripture goes on to pronounce him blessed who accomplishes the retaliation.

In themselves these words do not offer us any large truth about life. They do not pretend to speak out on any of the supreme themes of religion. They are very far from proposing love as the greatest thing in the world. They do not uncover our destiny to us. Do they even inspire us to what is good and right? What shall we make of them? What shall we say of them? Are they not the sort of Scripture which we hurry past, a little troubled, and wondering? Or which we point to, if we feel they shatter claims about the Bible as the Word of God, with a sceptical urgency, with a feeling that they are posers for the traditional view of the Scriptures? How can one take words full of such a repulsive sentiment as part of the Word of God?

These words exemplify and point, probably as well as any, a problem with the Bible which we do well to face and deal with frankly. What can properly enough be called the modern attitude to the Bible is to be commended at least for its new honesty with some old difficulties. There are many more Scriptures like these, full of moral difficulties. In the Psalm quoted, vengeance is invoked on Babylon, and on the wholly innocent in Babylon, and an atrocious vengeance. In other

Scriptures a fearful execration is visited on still other enemies; and not just on the offender, but on his children, and on all his house:

Set thou a wicked man over him;
And let an adversary stand at his right hand.
When he is judged, let him come forth guilty;
And let his prayer be turned into sin.
Let his days be few;
And let another take his office.
Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
And his children be vagabonds, and beg;
And let them see their bread out of their desolate places.
Let the extortioner catch all that he hath;
And let strangers make spoil of his labor.
Let there be none to extend kindness unto him;
Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children.
Let his posterity be cut off;
In the generation following let their name be blotted out.
Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with Jehovah;
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
Let them be before Jehovah continually,
That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.
(Psalm cix. 6-15.)

Is this not what we have more recently called a "hymn of hate"? Yet these petitions, let it be remembered, are put expectantly before God. They are not only asked of Him; they are set down in what we call His Word. Similar sentiments are even represented as coming from Him, like the law of retaliation.

And he that smiteth any man mortally shall surely be put to death. And he that smiteth a beast mortally shall make it good, life for life. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him. (Leviticus xxiv. 17-20.)

The problem is plain. In the Scriptures which we call the Word of God there are not only malediction and the spirit of retaliation, but God is put behind both malediction and vengeance. In our verses from the one hundred and thirty-seventh

Psalm the man who effects a terrible retaliation is the subject of a beatitude in the Scriptures. We seem to have God's Word for it that he will be blessed who takes Babylon's little ones and dashes them to pieces against the rocks.

What shall we think and say of such Scriptures? What do we say ordinarily? We certainly crave for the utterance and attitude of the students of the New Church all the candor and honesty called for. Nor is the question an insignificant matter in modern discipleship. So much of the unsettlement in Christendom is unsettlement about how to take the Bible! The traditional habit among us has been, in such Scriptures as offer a moral difficulty, to turn to the deeper meaning which those Scriptures, along with all Scripture, have. That deeper or spiritual sense is without embarrassment. Whatever the difficulty with the obvious sense, the deeper meaning is morally blameless. We quote an example of this typical procedure from a discussion by an English biographer of Swedenborg. In a book entitled "The Letter and the Spirit," Mr. Trobridge says:

> Though it may be difficult to meet some of these objections satisfactorily, if we regard the Bible as possessing nothing beyond the apparent, literal meaning, the spiritual sense removes all anomalies, and throws a striking light upon dark places. They are no longer blots upon the sacred page, but become themselves evidences of its divinity. Let us look at some of the spiritual lessons of the conquest of Canaan, by way of example. We all have a land of promise set before us, which we are invited to enter and possess; but it is held by our enemies whom we must first dislodge. We must give them no quarter, but must slay even the women and children, and dash the little ones against the stones. We must avoid every appearance of evil, if we would become citizens of that blessed country into which "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27). The foes we have to meet are those "of our own household," our evil passions and unholy desires, our self-deceptions and insincerities. If we knowingly allow any of these to lurk within our borders, they will prove "pricks in our eyes and thorns in our side," and will vex us continually. (Pp. 102, 103.)
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> Doubtless David did inveigh against his earthly enemies, and not without reason, for many times they "persecuted him without a cause"; but we can hardly believe that all his imprecations were meant to take

effect on them literally. Viewed in the spiritual sense, these psalms are filled with true devotion: as we fight against "spiritual wickedness in high places," we rightly pray that the wiles of our tempters may be frustrated and all their efforts brought to naught. We can wish for nothing too bad for the enemies of our souls, which in their essence are principles and not persons: may confusion and destruction overtake them! (P. 105.)

To this deeper meaning of our verses we shall turn presently. But now the question is whether this procedure, good in giving us the deeper sense of a hard scripture, removes the difficulty in the obvious sense of the passages. Are we not simply removing ourselves from the difficulty? There the troublesome statement still stands, an impossible sentiment of vengeance or of retaliation, morally offensive, anti-Christian certainly. How is it to be regarded? How can the Bible be the Word of God and contain it? How can such Scriptures be taken as part of the Word of God?

The modern attitude to the Bible is refreshingly frank on this head. It recognizes at once the impossible morals of such a Scripture saying as our text. Our own moral sense is higher than that of this Scripture, and is offended by it. To deny that, would be to deny a higher moral insight which has come to us later in Scripture. There is no blinking the wretchedness of the sentiment. So clear is this to the characteristic modern attitude to the Bible that efforts to harmonize the sentiment with the best truth of Scripture are themselves branded as immoral. For a while harmonizing was attempted. It was said that maledictions such as these of Psalm 137 were not so much imprecations by men of an evil lot on their enemies as declarations by God of the inevitable lot of the wicked. Or the offending words were put, as sometimes they could be, in the mouth not of Israel, but of the enemy, cursing the righteous. But this is often and probably usually impossible. . The general feeling came to be that it was vain to soften these harsh words. "It is better to leave the Scriptures undefended than to defend them by deceitful expedients" (Van Dyke, The Story of the Psalms, p. 183). "The coals of fire which this Psalmist scatters among Israel's foes are not those which Christ's servants are bidden

to heap on their enemies' heads" (Alexander McLaren). So the Apocalypse Explained (n. 411, 27) calls the action for which seemingly the Scripture calls a man blessed an "enormous crime," for doing which, of course, no man could be blessed. Even Gounod's glorious music, another says, cannot redeem from brutality the words of our text.

> The task of harmonizing such ethical conceptions with the Sermon on the Mount surely is too much for human wit or patience. . . . It is alike intellectually ruinous and morally debilitating to endeavor to harmonize those early ideals with the revelations of the great prophets and the Gospels. Rather, the method of Jesus is obviously applicable: "It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you." (The Modern Use of the Bible, Harry Emerson Fosdick, p. 27.)

The last quotation begins to indicate one of the first things to be said of such passages in Scripture as we are considering. We have in Scripture a progressive revelation. The highest and best things were not said at the outset. To the supreme truth of Scripture the whole development had to come by stages. Even in the thought of God one sees these stages of growth. He is one among many gods, at first. Slowly he is God above all the gods. Still more slowly His sole reality becomes plain, and the unreality of the others unmistakable. More slowly even than that, the true traits of His character appear. But in this process of religious education earlier stages were outgrown. Much was left behind by insight and by mounting standards. The only salutary course now is to recognize for abandoned what has been outgrown. One cannot safely take for Divine truth an outgrown stage in human apprehension of that truth. This realization is a first item in an immediate dealing with the sentiment and standard of such a passage as our Scripture saying. Our enemy, indeed, has been very slowly brought within the purview of love, even idealistically. It was something to inflict on him only what he inflicted or sought to inflict on us. But even that, now, is an inversion of the Golden Rule.

Seeing an early station in the spirit's march toward truth in such a Scripture as our imprecatory verses, in the second place

we can press on to the truth of which that stage fell short. Ungainsayably the Hebrew was moved by zeal for a righteous standard. There is at least no unconcern about evil here. It is cordially hated, if mistakenly. Unfortunately the Old Testament Jew hated the sinner along with the sin; and he was too inclined to see himself in the rôle of the righteous, and to put his enemy down for the unrighteous. The zeal was good, if misdirected. There was a making earnest with a standard. These energetic denunciations of the Edomites and the Babylonians only need de-personalizing. Distinguish sinner and sin, wrong-doer and wrong done, and then take the same uncompromising attitude to sin and evil as the Hebrew did to the personal foe, and one will do exceedingly well. Isaac Watts omitted from his metrical versions of the Psalms "the dreadful imprecations on God's enemies." It does not become a part, however, of the contemporary attitude to the Scripture on this head to drop out passages of outgrown ethics. They not only record a stage in the history of the truth of which we should know, and a stage of feeling which in fact we do not too easily rise above now. But de-personalize these denunciations, and they turn us against even the very feelings of retaliation and vengeance which first prompted the words! We will have nothing to do with those feelings! Concentrate on evil and sin the spirit of no compromise with evil, and no quarter for the enemy, and these sayings breed dead earnestness in us in the highest ethics.

Hate, as Spenser's allegory reminds us, is the twin of love: no piety can be robust which is incapable of hating. The precious lesson learned by the modern religious spirit is the power of separating sin and the sinner; of hating evil as Christ would hate it, and yet yearning to recover the fellow creature who has been entangled in it. To the mind of the ancient Psalmist this was an impossible distinction: his enemies were the enemies of God and of all possible goodness. Psalms of this description may still remain as a part of our books of devotion, but their expressions must be translated from the concrete to the abstract: when they can be read as embodiments of the evil that is in the world, the fierceness of their language will be a moral tonic. (The Modern Reader's Bible, R. G. Moulton, Introduction to the volume on The Psalms, pp. xxvi, xxvii.)

Is it not dealing directly with the moral difficulty of this Scripture and others like it to proceed in this way? There is no gainsaying and no attempting to gainsay the wretchedness of the sentiment and of the standard in such execrations of one's enemies. In the mode of utterance and in the thought alike a lower stage in the development, which is a progressive revelation, is recognized. And a truth is penetrated to, which in itself is right enough, however it was grasped and however it appeared to the Psalmist—the principle of no compromise with evil. Addressing oneself in this way to the moral difficulty of the verses where the difficulty lies, one can proceed to a deeper meaning without seeming to run away from that difficulty or to evade it. What is more, the deeper sense follows up the principle of no compromise with evil. The same truth is elaborated in that meaning. In the deeper sense we are spurred on once more to unyielding opposition to evil, and indeed to early opposition to it. In any life evil influences seek to kill the very beginnings of right purpose. A man is to treat with the same rigor the beginnings of evil purpose. Blessed is the man who does so. One man brings years stained with evil and sin and easy-going faith. Only after a time has he come to know the sure conflict with which every soul must make earnest. Then he is battered, scarred, marked. But another man comes with beautiful years, years of prompt and early battle, a life so early practiced in moral earnestness that there has been no battle fought back over lost fields. As evil would have done the tender beginnings of the spirit's true life despite, he was out against evil in *its* merest beginnings! With full truth we can pronounce that man blessed, blessed indeed.

William F. Wunsch.

SCRIPTURE AND THE SHECHEM MOUNTAINS

Almost the whole of the Holy Land one can see from the tops of Ebal and Gerizim. These mountains stand on the crest of the watershed between the brooks that run west to the

Mediterranean, and those that run sharply down to the Jordan and so into the Dead Sea whose waters lie about thirteen hundred feet below the sea level. How much of Scripture is connected with Shechem and her mountains, you may not realize until the facts are recalled to your minds. As a view from their tops embraces almost all of the Holy Land, so too their connection with Scripture embraces almost the extent of the Book, touching it at various points from Genesis xii., through Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, the Psalms, even into the Gospel of St. John.

May we not imagine that we are standing upon one of these Shechem Mountains, and that we are to see enacted before us the things described in Scripture that those mountains have looked upon? If we stood there and looked down at our feet to the valley, we should note that Ebal and Gerizim are separated by a narrow defile that sharply widens out into a beautiful valley, so that these mountains in part enclose the site of Shechem. Originally the name Shechem may have been a geographical name for the central portion of Palestine.

Look down now, from the mountain into the valley, to see Abram and his family appear.

> Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land, and there he builded an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him. (Gen. xii. 6, 7.)

These words call up before your mind's eye all that strange story, how God spoke to Abram and said,

> Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation . . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him . . . . into the land of Canaan, ... unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. (*Ibid,* xii., 1-6.)

We might pass that reference to the oak of Moreh (the phrase is translated in the AV as the plain of Moreh); but we

should realize that Abram found a sanctuary when he came, that the worship of the God who called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees did not begin in the land with Abram. This ancient oak, or grove, was originally a place of worship of the true God, given over in Abram's day to idolatry. Abram renewed the faith, building an altar there unto the God who there appeared unto him.

Look down now again to the valley. Years have passed by, and we see Jacob, returned from his exile, at peace with his brother. He enters Shechem, and, as if to honor the memory of Abraham, he buys land there where he has spread his tent. He erects an altar, calls it El-elohe-Israel, digs a deep well, buries under the oak the heathen gods, settles down in this valley to live. His burial of the heathen gods under the long lived oak, signifies the eternal rejection of them as dead. It was here that the Christ buried the heathen gods to eternity when He said:

> Salvation is of the Jews. . . . the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit. (Jn. iv. 22, 23.)

If we followed Jacob's life in this peaceful valley, where he bought land of Shechem's father, we should see it stained with blood. Shechem ravishes Dinah, and the Shechemites are slain by Jacob's sons. Shechem had offered marriage, and Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land" (Gen. xxiv. 30). On his death bed Jacob says of them, "Simeon and Levi, brethren, instruments of cruelty their habitations. . . . Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel" (*Ibid.*, xlix., 5, 7).

Now comes Joseph, after years have passed over the valley at our feet, sent to Shechem by his father to find his brethren. He must plod on his weary way, twelve miles farther north, to find them at Dothan, only to be sold into slavery by them. But Joseph does not forget Shechem though he never sees the

place again. Remember that on his death bed, become the great man of his tribe and indeed of Egypt, he spoke these words:

> I die and God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the Children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; and they embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Look down into that valley a few centuries later. See the family of Jacob that had numbered at first in Egypt but seventy souls, now a mighty host, occupied with some strange ceremony. Joshua himself is on Mount Ebal building an altar to the Lord God of Israel. On one side the valley, part way up on the mountain perhaps, are six of the tribes of Israel; on the other side the other six; with the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the Levites between the thus divided tribes (Joshua viii.). The altar completed, Joshua reads all the words of the Law, the blessings and the curses, as Moses commanded.

The blessings and the curses of God! Let us review a little of the familiar teaching about the curse of God. The order of teaching and learning in the Word is from most general truths; and therefore the letter abounds with such most general truths. For instance, it is said in the Word not only that Jehovah God turns away His face, is angry, punishes, and tempts, but also that He kills and even curses. It is so written in order that men should believe that the Lord governs and disposes each and all things in the universe, even evil itself and punishments, and temptations; and that they might, after they have received this most general idea, learn how He rules and disposes, and that He turns the evil of punishment and the evil of temptation into good. For Jehovah God the Lord never curses any one, is never angry with any one, never leads any one into temptation, punishes no one, still less does He curse any one. From the fountain of mercy, peace and good will, such things can never come. What have we not had set before us in the past in the way of curses? What may we not expect in the future?

Whenever something terrible happens, men turn to God with a question on their lips, How can such things happen? We may read the answer to our question in God's Book. The Bible is a mirror of human life as we see it in our own day. It is a Book on whose pages horror is writ large. When something terrible befalls the human race, or any portion of it, we cannot say, "This calamity is the sort of thing God does not know about"; for as we turn the pages of His Holy Book, we may read of an army drowned, of murder, treachery, sudden death, wars, desolation, plague, fire and earthquake, beside evils of every kind in the hearts of men. These very terrible things in the Bible, things that men in ignorant presumption have called its imperfections, are the links that bind it to men. We cannot cast this Book aside as we would cast aside one that, claiming to be Divine, took no notice of these human experiences of calamity. No; God's Book describes to us human life, not as lived by angels in the perfection of heaven, but life as lived by men on earth in the midst of imperfections. It describes to us life as we know it even when it is most horrible.

Turn now to some of the Scripture that bears upon the direction that the curses and the blessings were to be read from Ebal and Gerizim.

> Behold I set before you a blessing and a curse. . . . And it shall come to pass when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mt. Ebal (Deut. xi. 26, 29.)

There was a literal fulfilment by the Children of Israel of this command of the Lord, but it was not their first act on entering the land. It came after the fall of Jericho and Ai. Believing that there is a definite relation between the fall of these two cities and the command of God to read the blessings and the curses from mountain tops, let us dwell for a moment upon the story of the siege of Jericho and Ai.

Let us think back to a time centuries before the birth of Christ, when Israel, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, had at last by a mighty miracle crossed the Jordan,

the whole host of them, dry shod. Their first conquest must be Jericho. How this detail stands out in our minds from the Sacred page, that when Joshua came to a place where he could look out upon the City of Jericho, he looked but saw no city. Instead he saw the mighty figure of a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand.

Joshua said to him, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?"

The mighty angel replied, "Nay; but as Captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come. . . . Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

It was not the city Joshua needed most to see, but rather the leadership of the Captain of the Host of the Lord. The Captain of the Host of the Lord and not the captain of the army of Israel, was to lead them on to victory. Thus in a most impressive, belief-compelling way was the human leader of the host of Israel taught of the presence of God's power, leading to inevitable victory. With such a vision how easy it must have been for Joshua to follow the strange directions given him in the campaign against Jericho. How impotent the enemies of God's chosen people.

But a stranger thing now follows; they were victorious at Jericho but were defeated at Ai. Implicit human obedience broke down. The blessing of Divine leadership is followed by the curse upon human sin. The all of Jericho from greatest to least, save only Rahab, all the treasure of Jericho, had been declared accursed. What treasure there was in that city,—treasure of gold, of silver, of wondrous garments from Babylonia! The temptation to enrich himself, though in direct disobedience to God's commands, was too strong for one of Israel's warriors. One man took gold and silver and a goodly Babylonish garment, and hid them in his tent. Achan's sin was revealed as the cause of their disaster before Ai. Israel was purged from his sin by his death. Once more Israel was ready to obey Divine commands implicitly; and once more Israel marched on to victory. Israel was now ready, and went up onto mounts Ebal and Gerizim, to hear the blessings and the curses.

In their two experiences in the Holy Land of victory and defeat, God had set before them life itself as a blessing or a curse according as they were obedient or disobedient. This fundamental principle of their relation to their God was now to be proclaimed by them from the Shechem mountain tops. There is a circumstance that we should note. Moses by Divine command set up the altar upon Ebal, the mount of the curses. It was an altar of whole stones over which no man had lifted up any iron. Deuteronomy xxvii. tells us that these stones were plastered over; and in, or on, the plaster they wrote the Law. The letters may have been impressed while the plaster was soft, or painted on after it was hard and dry. It may seem to us a little strange that this altar and this writing were upon the mount of the curses rather than on the mount of the blessings.

The point to be noted here is, that all that people who heard the blessings and the curses could say with truth, "We have just seen that blessing follows us when we obey God's commands, and that death and disaster follow when we disobey. Truly God has set before this generation, as He set before our fathers, a blessing and a curse. Let us choose to obey Him, that both we and our seed may live."

Is there this lesson for us in the plastered altar on Mt. Ebal, that in all the curses that come upon us as individuals, as a nation, as a race of men, we may not see and know the actual stone of the altar of the God we worship? That is, we may not know God's reasons for permitting these terrible things; but on the plane of our own natural charity, on the clay on the stones of the altar, we may write the Law of our God and worship Him by doing what we can for our family, our country, our fellow race of beings, our Church. Probably the horrors of nature, like the horrors of human selfishness, will cease when the human race, like Joshua, as it looks out upon its task of conquest, shall see only the mighty angel, the captain of the host of the army of the Lord, and shall follow implicitly what he commands.

At the close of his life Joshua again comes to Shechem,

again calling together his people to hear his last exhortation. There he reviews to them all the mercies of the Lord. There he sets up a stone, under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord, a witness unto the renewed covenant between God and His people. (Joshua xxiv.)

The return of Jacob to his native land was marked by the birth of Joseph. It was only when he was born that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away that I may go to mine own place, and to my country." Is it not strange that the return of the Children of Israel to their own country, hundreds of years later, and the death of their first leader under whom they had conquered the land, were marked by the burial of the bones of Joseph?

The bones of Joseph, which the Children of Israel brought out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver (or lambs). (Joshua xxiv. 32.)

But look! who is this youth who suddenly appears on the mountain side with us, and calls down his defiance and scorn upon the people in the valley? He calls down into the valley, from the top of Mount Gerizim:

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them. (Judges ix. 7, 8.)

Space forbids the quoting of the rest of the rebuking parable of Jotham. But you remember he closes by saying that if they have not dealt truly and sincerely with his father and his father's house, "let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem." We read on to find that, shortly after, Abimelech beat down the city, sowed it with salt, having slain the people that was therein, and set fire to the tower of Shechem, so that about a thousand men and women of Shechem died there also.

In accounting for Shechem in the Scripture story, we must quote the strange words of Psalm lx. 6-8:

God hath spoken in his holiness: I will rejoice, I will divide

Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my law-giver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

To say that these words are "a prophecy respecting the human of the Lord, that it will be made Divine," is so general a statement that its most important use is to give us a reverent attitude of mind towards these old names.

From the vantage point of the Shechem Mountains we have been imagining that we have seen all this Bible drama enacted, as this procession of the Bible ages has wound its slow way through their valley. The greatest figure, the most heart-searching tableau of all the moving scenes of this sacred pageantry, is reserved until its close. Once more imagine that we look down into this historic valley. The Christ has come on earth. He has entered into His Ministry. He sits now before our eyes in the parcel of ground that Jacob bought, on the very well that Jacob dug, upon its curbing, worn into groves, as the centuries have passed, by the ropes that have drawn up the water from its depths. There at last is the Christ, a solitary figure, weary with His journey, His disciples gone to the city to buy food. If you are familiar with the people and the times you gaze upon, you will know Him at least for an Hebrew, and you may well be surprised to see that He engages in conversation with a Samaritan woman, who goes out of the city to draw water at the well. Knowing Him to be the Lord you are glad that all men are His children, Jew or Samaritan alike. You are thankful to Him for His charity to the woman at the well.

It is well to think, as we turn the pages of the Bible to pick out this story of Shechem, and come at last to this scene of the Lord at Jacob's well, of how perfectly this Scripture was known to the Lord Jesus as He sat there that day. To Him it was indeed a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The vast depth of knowledge of them of old time that Swedenborg opens before our astonished eyes as something too deep for us to enter far, was to Him a celestial life that He had

made to live among men. The blessings that had echoed from those mountain walls above Him, were to Him a perception of the Father's will, a revelation by the deepest things in Him to the nature that He had assumed, a blessing of Divine perception. The curses from the other mountain were to Him the very combats with evil that He had entered and was yet to enter, where with all the power of hell against Him, victory was yet His.

By this revelation and by these victories, by these two ways He knew that He was the Man, the only Man, who could lay down His life for His friends; who could say to the Father, "Thy will not mine be done"; who could say, "I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." There by the well of Jacob, near the bones of Joseph, near the oak where the heathen gods were buried and the covenant with Jehovah renewed, in the shadow of the Shechem Mountains, He declared Himself to be the Messiah.

Russell Eaton.

CURRENT LITERATURE

HISTORICAL METHOD IN BIBLE STUDY.*

Swedenborg in 1749, and Jean Astruc four years later, in 1753, published to the world that the Book of Genesis, and especially the Story of Creation, was made up from older documents. This was the beginning of modern historical study of the Bible, although Swedenborg's initiative has not been generally recognized. In fact Swedenborg's contribution to historical knowledge of the Bible is very much more important and more extensive than is realized by even the most devoted students of his Writings. Many important statements about the natural history of the Bible are scattered through his works; and if these were collected and presented systematically, it would do much to put him in his rightful historical position in this field.

It is truly astonishing how much work has been done recently in ferreting out every avenue to a further knowledge of Bible history. Some of this work has been valuable; much of it has been controversial and fanciful. From the point of view of general appreciation and a true knowledge of the Bible, the work has been at a constant disadvantage in holding to the controlling presupposition that its natural history gives us its full meaning. For merely scientific purposes this presupposition is of course perfectly legitimate; and there is no natural objection to pushing it to its extreme consequences. This is the commonly accepted meaning of the Historical Method.

The book before us is a very convenient and well written summary of the method and its results in the field of Bible study. The author succeeds well in maintaining an attitude of detachment, so that he states results as nearly as possible in

*_Historical Method in Bible Study._ By Albert Edwin Avey, Ph. D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1924. 198 pp., 12 mo. Cloth, $1.25.

the purely scientific and historical spirit. He is thoroughly committed to the historical method and to its application to the study of the Bible. He accepts without demur the principle that the Bible is the product of human experience, a record "of the growth of the moral and religious sense" of the Hebrew race. We must, therefore, seek the meaning of the Bible in the experiences of the men who wrote it. Furthermore, the truth of the Bible must be tested by the truth of experience in general. There must be some common basis of study,—an objective way of approach, acceptable to all. The historical method meets this requirement. The problem and the method of the historical criticism are well sketched in the first two chapters. Then follows a series of chapters on applications to the Old and New Testaments. The manuscripts, text, authorship, and content, are dealt with concisely; and finally a general statement of conclusions. An appendix contains a chronological table of Scripture documents, references for further study, questions for review, and subjects for research and for class discussion.

The point of most interest in the book is the use of the method in arriving at the conclusions which are generally agreed upon in the circle of the Higher Critics. The examples given make us acquainted with the actual procedure of the Critics, and enable us to judge for ourselves as to the results. It would be foreign to the present task to attempt even an outline of the author's treatment of the work in this field; but we may cite a few leading cases. After remarking that the Bible was originally a certain number of miscellaneous documents, which were subsequently collected, arranged, and adopted, he goes on to sketch the history of what is known about the copies of the manuscripts and their preservation. There are in fact none of the original manuscripts in existence; nor is there any record of their existence. The oldest copies we possess go back only to the ninth and tenth centuries A. D. It is known, however, that a translation of the then existent copies was made into Greek by a body of Greek and Hebrew scholars about the third century B. C. This translation is known as the Septuagint. Later, St. Jerome made a translation into Latin in

the fourth century A. D. This is the "Vulgate," the standard Bible of the Catholic Church. Our present Revised Version is made on the basis of a systematic comparison of many manuscript copies and earlier translations. On the other hand, the "primitive" stories of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, etc., are referred to the ninth and tenth centuries B. C.; consequently, during the long period of six hundred years the history of the Bible manuscripts remains hidden from our knowledge, except what has been handed down by tradition. Modern effort to reconstruct that history on the basis of external as well as internal evidence has been tentative and hypothetical,—much of it little better, some of it worse, than guesswork.

The earliest external reference to the Hebrew Scriptures is contained in the book Ecclesiasticus, written about 160 B. C. The author speaks of "the law, the prophets, and the other books of our fathers." This is taken to mean that there was at the time a well established tradition that the Hebrew Scriptures were classified as the law, the prophets, and the other sacred books. Later references occur in the first century B. C. Philo and Josephus give notable examples in the first century A. D. Much has been made of the parallel between Jewish history and literature and that of other nations, especially the Babylonians. They have, for example, stories of creation. But any one who will compare the story in Genesis with that of the Babylonians, will see how far apart they are, and will realize that he is in a different world in the Babylonian story. No doubt that both of them go back to far older times, and were borne down through generation after generation on the wings of a hallowed tradition; but this would establish no direct connection between the two. In other words, we get little or no help in understanding the story of Genesis from the Babylonish parallel: they have a radically different character. The truth is, close acquaintance with the historical approach, although helpful in its way, fails of the specific purpose to get at the real character and meaning of the Bible. For the Bible embodies a meaning of which the writers were not conscious, a meaning entirely distinct from and above its natural history. Its real meaning lies on a spiritual level which the writers them-

selves did not occupy. The historical method reaches certain conclusions about the date, authorship, place of writing, sources, etc., of the several books of the Bible—conclusions which are at variance with the oldest tradition, and also at variance with the claims of the Bible itself.

A few examples will bring us closer to the method, and enable us to judge of the kind of evidence that is relied upon. Some statements in Genesis and the other books are used to show that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. It may or may not be a matter of true spiritual importance whether Moses wrote it or not; but assuredly an honest-minded person would not be lightly cast aside, the adverse evidence should be positive and definite. One of the statements cited is Genesis xii. 6: "And the Canaanite was then in the land." The implication, it is argued, that at the time of the writing the Canaanite was not in the Land. But a little attention to the context discredits this inference. In the first place it might be urged that in the Higher Critics' view this could be taken as an instance of a marginal note by an early editor or copyist which was afterwards inserted in the text by a later editor or copyist. On this supposition, the authorship would remain unquestioned. But it is unnecessary to resort to the common subterfuge of the Higher Critics. The statement occurs in connection with the account of Abram's journey to Moreh. Moses may perfectly well have added this remark in view of the situation before him. He knew from the report of the spies that the Canaanites were dwelling in the low lands; and we could express the force of the remark, by the slight change of making it read "And the Canaanite was even then in the land, as he is now." To assume that the writer must have been living at a time when the Canaanite was no longer in the land, is purely arbitrary, and suppose pre-adve. Certainly such assumption and pre-adve should not be allowed to outweigh a time-honored tradition.

But this is not all that can be said in favor of the Mosaic authorship. Swedenborg in the comment on this verse gives an important reason why Moses should have added the words. Taken in the context, Swedenborg says it means, spiritually understood, that before the Lord overcame all temptations He

had hereditary evil in His external man. The spatial type in Abram's coming to the oak grove at Moreh; and thus means the Lord's first perception of the Divine love in His interior life. In view of this representation, we see that the addition is called for, and why Moses made it. It is a case of inspiration by correspondence. It was natural that Moses should speak of the Canaanites in describing Abram's entry into the land, for he had only recently had the report of the spies who made special reference to the Canaanites. We may suppose that, according to the principle of inspiration by correspondence, when the thought occurred to Moses the Lord saw the opportunity to make use of it to develop the spiritual meaning, and consequently gave the thought a feeling quality which it would not have had otherwise, and inserted its expression in the words cited. We may think that it was in accordance with this principle that the whole letter of the Books was given, and that this is what we mean by the Bible being inspired and by a revelation.

We might take other like cases, and consider them in the light of imperial history, and from the point of view of Swedenborg's interpretation. Genesis xxxvi. 31 is a case which might be fairly well treated either as an interpolation or a forecast. But we pass on to the most susceptible and frequently cited case, Deuteronomy xxxiv. 5-12. These verses give the account of the death of Moses and the succession of Joshua. Obviously Moses could not have written this. The natural explanation is that it was added by an editor as a postscript at the end of the Pentateuch, i. e., at the end of what Moses wrote. It is true that this introduces a troublesome factor into the Bible text, one which should be used sparingly and with the greatest caution. Many such factors seem to be introduced by the Higher Critics under various presuppositions, especially the natural history presupposition that everything must be explained by its natural history.

As a matter of fact, there are many difficulties in the letter of the Bible. Duplications, redundancies, incongruities, meet us with disturbing frequency. Some of them are explained or removed by the enlightenment of the spiritual meaning and the

principle of correspondence: some of them may be explained by further knowledge of Bible history. But we feel that for the plain reading of the letter the so-called historical method is too prone to substitute guesses, opinions, and inferences, where more caution would preserve the integrity of the Bible as it has come down to us.

The historical method is much infected with the vice of reading our modern ideas into Bible language and Bible times. It is no easy matter to read an ancient text; but it is very easy and very natural to read into the text. The history of Early Greek Philosophy is a signal example of this: in which case the result is that most of the histories take you away from, rather than into, Early Greek Philosophy. The same may be said of the historical studies of the Bible; though it may be that there is some improvement in this field.

LEWIS F. HITE.

THE MAKING OF THE BIBLE.*

A slight acquaintance with books on the history of the Bible leaves us with the impression that the field is largely one of conjecture, and further acquaintance tends rather to strengthen the impression. It is surprising and baffling to the student to find that there is so little history of the Lord's life outside the Gospels themselves; the same is true of the Bible as a whole. Recent investigations have added something to our knowledge of Bible history, but mainly in the direction of confirming what we already knew from the Bible itself. Nevertheless, the books are multiplying, and the field of conjecture is enlarging, with the result that the public mind is stimulated and kept informed

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*God, Conscience, and the Bible. By J. PATERSON SMYTH, B. D., L. L. D., Litt. D., D. C. L. New York: James Pott and Co. 1924. 164 pp., 12 mo. Cloth, $1.00.

The Ancient Documents and the Modern Bible: A Story of the Rabbis and the Ancient Manuscripts. By J. PATERSON SMYTH, B. D., L. L. D., and Litt. D. New York: James Pott and Co. 226 pp., 12 mo. Cloth, $2.00.

as to what is being done to make the history of the Bible as complete as possible.

Doctor J. Paterson Smyth has worked industriously to popularize the results of these studies and investigations; and with some success. Among his numerous books, the two which lie before us are typical. In the one, first published under another title some years ago, we have briefly told the usual account of the Old Hebrew Documents, and of the textual criticism and revision which have been applied to them. In the other, which as a new publication especially concerns us in this review, the author attempts to use the faculty of conscience as the medium and instrument of inspiration and revelation.

Conscience, he defines as "the faculty which recognizes righteousness and oughtness," "a direct perception of the difference between right and wrong," an inborn sense of "ought and ought not," "the organ of the Holy Spirit." "Conscience illuminated by the Holy Spirit" is our guide in interpreting the Bible. No interpretation which violates conscience is allowable. When we actually find statements which do violate conscience, we are to be reminded that the Bible is "God's great school"; that it is a record of the process by which God gradually educated the conscience; that it is a body of progressive educational material: and when we find imperfect knowledge and low morals, we must refer it to the proper imperfect stage of development of the people.

We would expect some statement of the operation of conscience in the beginning of Bible formation; but we are surprised to find that all this part of the history is ignored, and nothing is suggested as to how the Bible was given originally. We are simply told that there were certain ancient documents, and that Bible formation began with the collection and arrangement, editing, or "redaction" of these documents. The specific work of conscience was to distinguish and discriminate between the fit and the unfit among them. When reduced strictly to its lowest terms, this is merely another way of stating the familiar and conventional natural history view, that the Bible is a natural product of the religious and moral development of the Hebrews, and of the religious and moral acquirements

and attainments of the writers. Inspiration means in this no more than in the case of Homer or Shakespeare.

In short the author accepts without scruple or criticism the so-called results of modern scholarship, and seems to be unaware of the severe arraignment of the work of the scholars by each other and by others. No doubt there were ancient documents. Of this we have direct evidence in the Bible itself; and Swedenborg's evidence as to their existence and character is specific. But there is no evidence from any source that precludes the employment of them by Moses. There are statements in the letter which taken strictly are untrue; but these are consistently explained by Swedenborg as the language of appearances.

Doctor Smyth's books are written in a clear and attractive style, and have some value as convenient and readable accounts of what is going on in the world of scholarship; but they are not free from misleading and destructive principles and details. With this caution they may be read with enjoyment and profit. This remark applies more or less to all the books of the "Higher Critics."

LEWIS F. HITE.

"WHAT AILS OUR YOUTH?"

In answer to the query "What ails our youth?" Dr. Coe has written a truly great book*—one which inspires while it instructs.

The gravest danger confronting our youth, urges Dr. Coe, is that they will become merely conventional copies of their elders. At almost all costs we must strive to preserve the spontaneous and creative variability of youth. And to this end it should be our policy to become learners with them; to let youth show us our faults while we show them theirs; and to share their spirit of experiment and progress as brothers engaged in the common task of making a better world.

**What Ails Our Youth?* By GEORGE A. COE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1924. 97 pp., 12 mo. Cloth, $1.25.

With the mind of a trained scientific thinker Dr. Coe analyzes our new civilization, and points out that if the majority of our youth are weak in the range and depth of their purposes, it is because their education is permeated with the materialistic assumptions and semi-pagan influences of modern institutions. Education must make room for a frank criticism of the ends and purposes actually present in modern occupations and institutions; and this must not be by means of a separate "course of study," but in immediate unity with all youth's studies of fact and process.

In an honest and good heart Dr. Coe criticizes the church also for its stultifying effect upon our youth, in that it seeks to make them think of religion as a static and fixed thing, instead of an ever growing and dynamic power for righteousness.

Cherish our critical and progressive youth. Make them junior partners in the concerns of life. This is the moral of the book.

JOHN WORCESTER SPIERS.

"A RELIGION OF TRUTH, JUSTICE AND PEACE."*

Dr. Isidor Singer's recent book entitled "A Religion of Truth, Justice and Peace" is in the main a series of brief biographical sketches, with a purpose. Though dedicated to "The Academic Youth of America," the volume carries a special message to the forward-looking young people of the author's own race, who ought to catch no little inspiration from the illuminating sketches of the lives of such great lay-apostles of social and international justice as Ferdinand Lassalle, Walter Rathenau,

*_A Religion of Truth, Justice and Peace;_ a Challenge to Church and Synagogue to Lead in the Realization of the Social and Peace Gospel of the Hebrew Prophets. By ISIDOR SINGER, PH. D., originator and managing editor of the "Jewish Encyclopedia." With an Introductory Essay by Edward A. Filene, and an Epilogue by Israel Zangwill. New York: The Amos Society, 51 Chambers St. 1924. 318 pp., 8 vo.

The author has reserved fifty copies of his book for presentation to such of our clergymen and theological students as may apply for them.

Joseph Fels, David Lubin, Ivan von Bloch, Dr. Alfred H. Fried, and Oscar S. Straus.

Yet the book is of interest also to all who are working sincerely for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and who earnestly believe that the social teachings of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus must be vigorously applied to the larger relations of life no less than to the smaller. The Christian Church has been, until recent years, woefully lax in this issue; and even now is perhaps not as fully alive thereto as it should be. But the Jews, Dr. Singer believes, both by ancient heritage and present endowment, are peculiarly fitted at this, the opportune day, to assume the leadership in an energetic program of social and international justice—to become, as he says, "the special advance-guard of Yahveh's New Era of Civilization which will begin when Isaiah's and Micah's hope has been fulfilled." He continues:

> Do we, then need to fear serious contradiction to the statement that the Synagogue, provided it fully awakens to its present opportunity and conforms wholeheartedly to the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, has a justified claim to become again one of the religious leaders of the world?

Incidentally, he believes that if the Synagogue rises now to this its historic mission, it will be saved from filing a petition in spiritual bankruptcy. In saving the world, it would save itself also.

But Dr. Singer would not have the Synagogue attempt to redeem the present social order single-handed (and here the chief significance of the book seems to lie); he pleads eloquently for the cooperation of Church and Synagogue. He writes:

> The continuous burden of the present book is a plea, backed by the life-sketches of a dozen prominent Jewish champions of the social and peace gospel of the Hebrew prophets, for the active co-operation of Synagogue and Church in behalf of the speedy establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Here, indeed, is an invitation and a challenge!* Can the

*By special offer of Dr. Singer, clergymen and students of theology among the readers of the REVIEW can secure copies of his book gratis on application to the Amos Society, 51 Chambers Street, New York City.

Christian Church afford to turn a deaf ear to either? Rather, should it not rejoice at this evidence that the old antagonism between Judaism and Gentilism seems to be weakening, and that in a program of social and international justice there is opportunity for a genuine rapproachment between liberal Christians and liberal Jews? Surely there is no valid reason whatever why men of various beliefs should not co-operate in an attempt to establish on the earth the kingdom of justice and righteousness of which the ancient prophets dreamed, and of which Jesus Himself was the supreme exponent.

On the whole, Dr. Singer has written a good book, rather more inspiring than definitely constructive. He points to the way, but does not chart it. Perhaps he will attempt this in a later work.

H. Durand Downward.

DAILY LIGHT ON THE DAILY PATH.*

The pages of this fat, little, devotional book are not numbered; but as there are two pages for every day in the year (one for morning and the other for evening devotion), besides a considerable number "for special occasions," the total does not fall far short of eight hundred. With the exception of the extra pages, every page begins with a date, followed by a text from Scripture; after which come two, or three, or more paragraphs, each made up of one or more sentences, in the latter case from different books of the Bible. A sample page will give the best idea of the book; and for this purpose we choose that of the evening of June 11th, with text dear to the heart of every New-Churchman:

**Daily Light on the Daily Path;* a Devotional Text Book for Every Day in the Year in the Very Words of Scripture. London: S. Bagster & Sons, Ltd.; New York: James Pott & Co. (1924.) c. 770 pp., 32 mo. Blue cloth, $1.25; keratol, $1.75: French seal, full gilt edges, $2.50. (A larger edition is also procurable, in bindings as above, and at prices ranging from $2. to $2.75.)

June 11.—*Behold, I make all things new.*

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.—Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.—The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Seeing . . . . that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

Rev. 21. 5. John 3. 3.—II Cor. 5. 17. Ezek. 36. 26.—I Cor. 5. 7.—Eph. 4. 24. Is. 62. 2. Is. 65. 17. 2 Pet. 3. 11.

Disconnected sentences from the Bible thrown together in this way, and published in a *vade mecum* form for daily nibbling, doubtless have their value; and it seems probable that this little volume will have a large circulation for such use. New-Church readers will naturally object to it on one ground at least,—that many of the sentences are taken from parts of the Bible that by them are not considered as the Word of the Lord; but as New-Churchmen as a rule are not very familiar with those uncanonical parts of the Scriptures, it will do no harm for them to acquire further acquaintance by such reading.

B. A. WHITTEMORE.

PROBLEMS OF CHURCH UNITY

It may well be that it is quite as bad, when having something to say, to say it in a manner so obscure that the point is lost, as it is to publish a book with nothing at all to say. That unfortunately is the impression one gets from Mr. Lowrie's "Problems of Church Unity."* Indeed, one admits obscurity only as an hypothesis, and not because one has with

**Problems of Church Unity.* By WALTER LOWRIE, Rector of the American Church, Rome. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. (1924). 344 pp., 12mo. Cloth $3.00.

difficulty pierced to something valuable. For it seems impossible that so much learning, and such a devout and sincere attempt to make a contribution to Church Unity should have so little result,—that the occasional flashes of insight are only accidents.

After an Introduction the book deals in two preliminary chapters with "The Idea of the Church" and "The Idea of Church Unity." The first defines the Church as a company of Christians assembled with the Lord. The second brings forward the idea that "unity . . . is practical only on the basis of accepting the Apostolic Age as normative for the Church at all times" (p.66). This principle is then applied to what the author considers the essential requirements for unity. Unity, he contends, is possible only when all Christians can pray together, partake of the Lord's Supper together, recognize a common ministry, and are joined together in a common faith and love.

Surely no one would contend that Christian unity will ever exist apart from these things. It is certainly to the credit of the author that he sees the problem of unity in these essentially religious terms rather than in terms of adherence to a common organization. But it is doubtful how many people to-day would be willing to accept the practice of the Apostolic Age as the norm for present day practice. It is only fair to the author to say that by norm he does not mean an absolute rule or law, but a norm which in its application is capable of development and even change to meet actual conditions. But even so, the liberal Protestant (who among Protestants is chiefly interested in unity) will not be likely to accept the premise.

Nor will his willingness be increased when he finds the discussion of prayer and the Holy Supper concerned chiefly with liturgical matters. And if he gets as far as the chapter on a common ministry, he is likely to stop short in the middle of it to ask whether he is reading a work on Church History, or whether after all Church Unity *is* being discussed. Even if all Protestants should accept the author's conclusions

as to what our practice should be, no one can suppose that (despite his erudite arguments) the Roman Catholic Church, or even the Episcopal Church, of which he is a member, would accept either his liturgical notions or his ideas on the order of the ministry.

The book often gives one an impression of aloofness from actual conditions. One asks himself just what live issue such and such a point is supposed to meet. It may well be that this is due to the author's residence in Rome as the rector of the American Church. To the fact that the book was printed there is probably due the multitude of slight but disturbingly obvious typographical errors.

Here and there, as has been said, there are flashes of insight which transcend the limits of what seems often a petty and tiresome exposition. Indeed, it is in such a transcendence of questions of liturgy and order that there *is* a basis for a hope of Christian unity. These flashes are scattered, and usually of brief duration; but here is a paragraph that is worth sharing:

> But if it be really impossible for Christians to unite in common worship, they can never be really united. It is vain to talk of Christian union, if Christians cannot commonly pray together; and such an expression as Church unity is plainly absurd when it is applied to a state of affairs which is expected to unite men formally under one government, while it leaves them as far separated as ever in the central act of worship. . . . If we consider prayer merely as the act of making our desires known to the Supreme Being, we must acknowledge that all men can pray *together,* if they can pray at all. But if prayer is communion with God through Christ, and if this is the very act which constitutes the Church, none who are not Christians can join in our prayer, and that any Christians should be separated from us in this act, implies a most dolorous separation (p.74).

FREDERIC R. CROWNFIELD.

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The Massachusetts New-Church Union has recently acquired the entire publisher's remainder of the following books by that ardent Swedenborgian, Henry James, the elder, father of the late Professor William James, the psychologist, and Henry James, the novelist.

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